

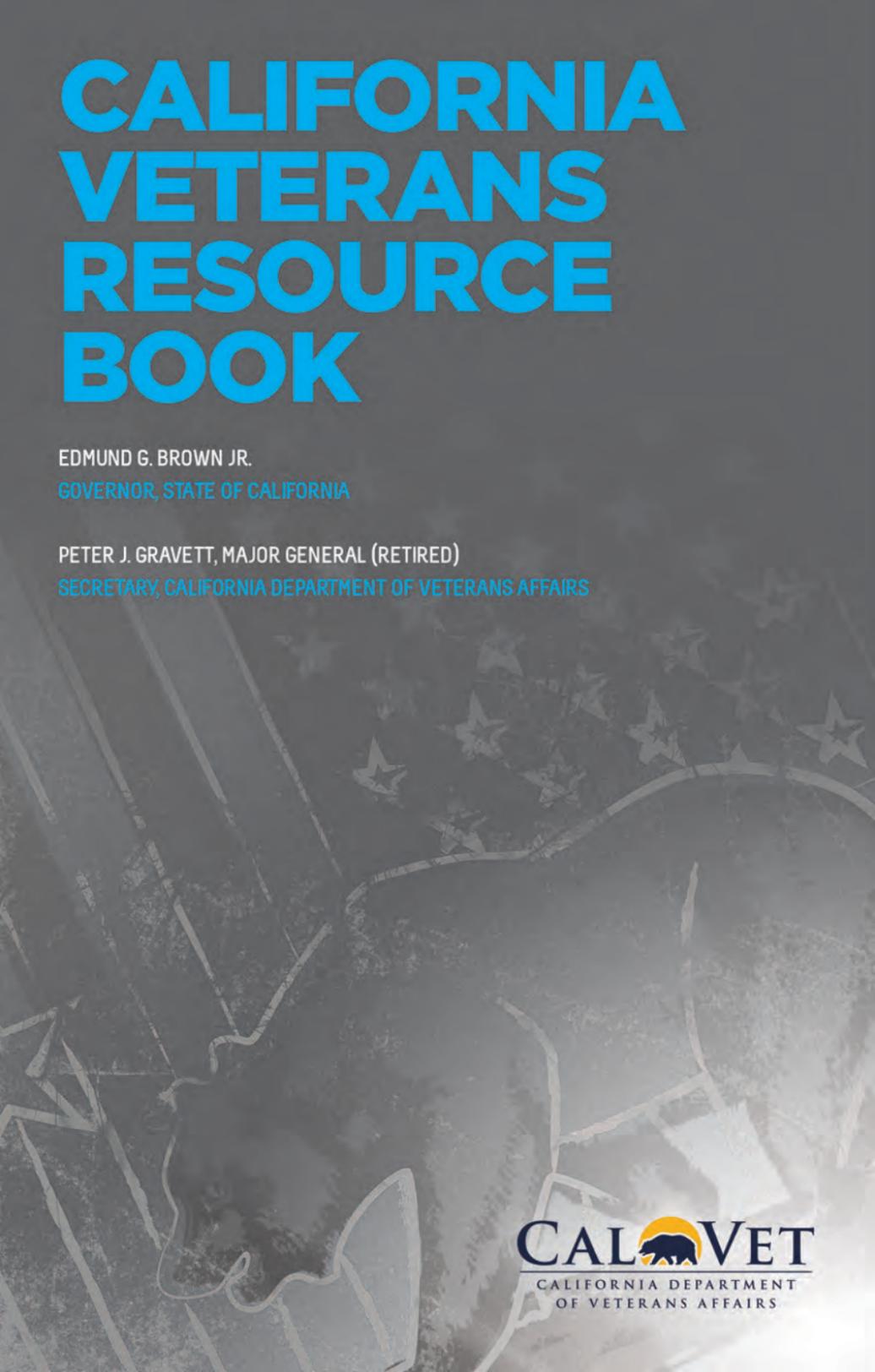
CALIFORNIA VETERANS RESOURCE BOOK

EDMUND G. BROWN JR.

GOVERNOR, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

PETER J. GRAVETT, MAJOR GENERAL (RETIRED)

SECRETARY, CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



CAL VET
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

On behalf of all Californians, I express my deepest appreciation to all of those who have served in the military. Their selfless sacrifices and contributions have protected our nation's most precious asset: freedom. We owe them our deepest gratitude and unfaltering support.

Many services and benefits available to veterans have expanded and improved over the past decade, and this guide provides comprehensive information about them. I encourage our veterans and their families to take full advantage of this helpful resource to better access the services and benefits they so richly deserve.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edmund G. Brown Jr." with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Edmund G. Brown Jr.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
POST OFFICE BOX 942895
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 94295-0001
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**Message from the CalVet Secretary**

I am pleased to present the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) Veterans Resource Book for 2014-15.

This past year was full of challenges for CalVet, but in spite of these trials, we managed to forge ahead and live up to our mission "To serve California's veterans and their families." Much good work was accomplished by CalVet, and this improved Veterans Resource Book is an example of such exemplary work performed by our staff.

After many months of careful review, we decided that the way to make this Veterans Resource Book more user-friendly was to divide it into chapters, each dealing with a specific topic of interest to veterans. As you go through this book, you will find all available resources dealing with a specific topic neatly organized, thus making your search for benefits much easier. I want to encourage all California veterans and their families to visit CalVet's website at www.calvet.ca.gov to get connected with the benefits and services you so richly deserve.

I hope you find the information in this Veterans Resource Book both helpful and enjoyable. You have earned these benefits and services, which is not a handout but rather a hand up. On behalf of the Governor and the people of our Golden State, thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter J. Gravett".

PETER J. GRAVETT
Major General (Retired)
Secretary

HONORING CALIFORNIA'S VETERANS

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CHAPTER 1:

CALIFORNIA STATE BENEFITS



REGIONAL OUTREACH: CONNECTING VETERANS TO THEIR BENEFITS (CALVET FIELD AGENTS)

CalVet works closely with local communities in its efforts to serve veterans. To ensure veterans get the assistance, benefits and services they need, CalVet has divided California into eight regions and has staffed each region with a Local Interagency Network Coordinator (LINC). These LINC's play a dynamic role within local communities, serving as both informational conduits to the community and feedback resources for CalVet.

LINC's bridge the gap between CalVet and the federal, state, county, and non-government agencies that provide services to our state's nearly 2 million veterans. The LINC's are advocates for veterans, military service members, and their families in their respective regions. In addition, they supplement and support the County Veterans Service Offices and regional partners in the development of improved and expanded services and support for their local veteran populations and assist veterans with employment and educational opportunities.

The eight LINC regions are:

- » **Sacramento Valley and North State:** Sacramento Valley includes; Yolo, Sutter, Yuba, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, El Dorado, Amador, Calaveras, Alpine, Siskiyou, Modoc, Trinity, Shasta, Lassen, Tehama, Plumas, Sierra, and Butte.
- » **Bay Area:** Sonoma, Napa, Marin, Contra Costa, Alameda, San Francisco, San Mateo, San Joaquin, Santa Clara, Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Glenn, Colusa, Lake and Solano.
- » **Inland Empire:** San Bernardino, Riverside, Inyo and Mono.
- » **Central Valley:** Stanislaus, Tuolumne, Merced, Mariposa, Madera, Fresno, Kings, San Benito, Tulare and Kern.
- » **Central Coast:** Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz.
- » **Los Angeles:** Los Angeles and Ventura.
- » **Orange:** Orange.
- » **San Diego:** San Diego and Imperial.

INTER-SERVICE FAMILY ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE

The Inter-Service Family Assistance Committee (ISFAC) is a voluntary military cooperative partnership organized to provide multi-service networking for training and assistance to ensure “Total Force Family Readiness.” The main purpose of this committee is to provide assistance to families regardless of service component. The goal of the ISFAC is to strengthen existing family assistance delivery systems in the event of mobilization, deployment, or natural disaster through the interaction of committee members. In addition, the committee serves the purpose of linking outside organizations (non-profits, faith based, and military associations) and military branches together to make a stronger support network for military personnel and their families throughout the State of California. Many of ISFAC’s veteran support tools have proven to be effective in helping currently serving military members and their families, and it is this inter-relationship that has allowed CalVet to grow its support base with both professional and volunteer assistance to veterans.

CALVET VETERANS SERVICES DISTRICT OFFICES

CalVet has established a Veterans Services District Office located at each of the three VA Regional Offices. The District Offices assist veterans and their families in accessing their federal and state veteran benefits at no cost. These offices also provide veteran claims representation and, in cases with unfavorable decisions, assist in the appeals process. All three District Offices are open to the public and welcome walk-ins.

Oakland District Office

1301 Clay Street, Room 1130N

Oakland, CA 94612

(510) 286-0627

Hours: 8:00a.m. – 4:00p.m. (Mon-Thu)

Los Angeles District Office

11000 Wilshire Boulevard, Room 5203

Los Angeles, CA 90024

(213) 620-2755

Hours: 8:00a.m. – 3:30p.m. (Mon-Thu)

8:00a.m. – 12:00p.m. (Fri)

San Diego District Office
8898 Rio San Diego Drive
San Diego, CA 92108
(619) 400-0070
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 3:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION FEES WAIVED

This benefit waives registration fees and provides a free license plate for one passenger motor vehicle, one motorcycle, or one commercial motor vehicle of less than 8,001 pounds unladen weight.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Medal of Honor recipients, American Ex-Prisoners of War and “disabled veterans” as defined in the Disabled Veterans License Plate section of this book are eligible (pg.12).

HOW DO I APPLY?

To apply, Medal of Honor recipients should complete a Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Form REG 17A, and proof of receipt of the Medal of Honor. Ex-Prisoners of War should complete a DMV Form REG 17, and provide proof of their former POW status. To download DMV Form REG 17 and 17A, go to www.dmv.ca.gov. Veterans may also call (800) 777-0133 to request a mailed copy. Mail the application and necessary documentation to:

Department of Motor Vehicles
Special Processing Unit, MS D238
P.O. Box 932345
Sacramento, CA 94232-0001



VETERANS LICENSE PLATE PROGRAM

The California's Veterans' License Plate Program allows current service members, veterans, family members, and supporters of veterans the opportunity to proudly display their support for those men and woman that served in the United States Armed Forces. The program has over 100 different emblems and logos to choose from and place on the automobile's license plate.

CALIFORNIA "VETERAN" LICENSE PLATE

Starting in 2014, we are taking reservations for a "Veteran" license plate. For more information, contact CalVet at (916) 653-2573..

CALIFORNIA "HONORING VETERANS" LICENSE PLATE

Available to all California motorists, this special California license plate may be ordered with the branch of service, unit, or veterans service organization logo/emblem of choice. Over 100 insignias are available, and the logo will be prominently displayed to the left of a six number/letter combination. Original sequential plates are \$50 (this may be a tax-deductible contribution and is in addition to normal DMV license fees). "Personalized" license plates (choice of up to 6 characters) are available for \$78. The renewal fees for sequential and personalized are the same—\$40 for auto, truck or motorcycle. All proceeds from the sale of veterans plates are used to expand veteran services statewide.

HOW TO APPLY:

Those interested in an "Honoring Veterans" license plate should apply online at www.dmv.ca.gov/ipp2/welcome.do. More information on how to obtain veterans' plates is available on the CalVet website, www.calvet.ca.gov (Veteran Services), and can be obtained from the local County Veterans Service Office (pg. 163).

SPECIAL LICENSE PLATES FOR CALIFORNIA VETERANS

California also offers special license plates to honor the service of the following veterans:

» **Medal of Honor**

Medal of Honor recipients are eligible for one set of free commemorative license plates.

» **Legion of Valor**

Veterans who are Medal of Honor recipients, Army Distinguished Service Cross, the Navy Cross, or the Air Force Cross are eligible for special Legion of Valor license plates.

» **Former Prisoners of War**

Former American Prisoners of War are eligible for one set of free commemorative license plates.

» **Pearl Harbor Veterans**

An honorably discharged veteran who was stationed at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, is eligible for special Pearl Harbor Survivor license plates.

» **Purple Heart**

Any veteran who is a Purple Heart recipient is eligible for special Purple Heart license plates.

HOW TO APPLY:

Complete a Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Form REG 17A and provide proof of aforementioned medal award or evidence of being stationed at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Former POWs must complete DMV Form REG 17.

Mail completed application and necessary documentation to:

Department of Motor Vehicles

P.O. Box 932345

Sacramento, CA 94232

For more information, call the DMV at (800) 777-0133 or go to www.dmv.ca.gov.

Note: Those veterans with a Medal of Honor, Legion of Valor, Former Prisoner of War, Pearl Harbor, or Purple Heart license plate may park his or her motor vehicle, weighing not more than 6,000 pounds gross weight, without charge, in a metered parking space. This does not exempt a vehicle with the aforementioned license plates from complying with any other state law or ordinance.

GOLD STAR LICENSE PLATES

“Gold Star Family” license plates are available to families free of charge who want to honor loved ones lost during service to their country.

Note: The plates must be assigned to a California-registered vehicle owned by the qualified family member. Gold Star Family License Plates are only available as sequential plates through DMV headquarters.

HOW TO APPLY:

Each qualified family member who applies for a Gold Star Family License Plate is required to submit original copies of the following completed and signed forms:

- » Project Gold Star License Plate Application;
- » Special License Plate Application (REG 17A);
- » Report of Casualty (DD 1300) from the Department of Defense.

The Project Gold Star License Plate application must be certified by a County Veteran Service Office (pg. 163). Mail applications and necessary documentation to:

Department of Motor Vehicles

Special Processing Unit
P.O. Box 932345 MS D238
Sacramento, CA 94232

DISABLED VETERANS LICENSE PLATE (DV)

Service-connected disabled veterans with any of the conditions listed below may receive, free of charge, a set of special “DV” plates which permit free parking at all parking meters in the state with no time limit and allows for parking in handicapped zones. VA proof of service connection is required, and the service-connected disability must, according to California Vehicle Code Section 295.7, be identified as one of the following:

- » Rated at 100% disabled due to a diagnosed disease or disorder which substantially impairs or interferes with mobility; or,

- » Limits movement without the aid of an assistive device; or,
- » Due to loss of, or lost the use of, one or more limbs; or,
- » Due to permanent blindness as defined in Section 19153 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

HOW TO APPLY:

Have a VA official complete the Medical Statement for Service-Connected Disabled Veterans which indicates that the veteran has a service-connected disability with at least one of the above listed mobility impairments. Then, complete and sign DMV Forms REG 195 and REG 256A. Mail completed forms to:

DMV PLACARD

Special Processing Unit, MS D238

P.O. Box 932345

Sacramento, CA 94232-0001

Note: There are two different Medical Statements for Service-Connected Disabled Veterans, and each is based upon residence location. Ensure you select the form that corresponds to the local VA facility location.

FISHING AND HUNTING LICENSES

This benefit reduces annual fees for fishing and hunting licenses for disabled veterans.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Any honorably-discharged veteran with a 50% or greater service-connected disability is eligible. There is no residency requirement to obtain a reduced annual fishing or hunting license fee.

HOW DO I APPLY?

To apply, download and complete a reduced-fee fishing or hunting license application from the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) website at www.dfg.ca.gov/licensing/hunting/reducedfee.html or call (916) 928-5805 to request an application be mailed.

First-time applicants must submit proof of their service-connected disability from the VA. For subsequent annual licenses, a copy of a previous year's California reduced fee sport fishing or hunting license is required.

After a veteran purchases their first sport fishing license from a DFW License Sales Office, they may purchase subsequent licenses from any license agent. Hunting licenses, however, are only available at DFW License Sales Offices.

Mail the application with VA proof of service-connected disability (if required) to:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife

License and Revenue Branch

1740 N. Market Boulevard

Sacramento, CA 95834

or any Department of Fish and Wildlife Office.

STATE PARKS AND RECREATION PASS

The Distinguished Veteran Pass entitles the holder to the use of all basic State Park System operated facilities, including camping and day use, at no further charge. The pass is not valid at units operated by local government, private agencies, or concessionaires and it is not valid for special events, group campsites, and commercial use or for supplemental fees. The pass cannot be used in conjunction with any other pass and/or discount.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Any honorably discharged war veteran who is a resident of California with a 50% or more service-connected disability, or was held as a prisoner of war by forces hostile to the United States, or recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor.



HOW DO I APPLY?

Download and complete a Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) application found at www.parks.ca.gov/pages/737/files/dpr619.pdf. Submit proof of service-connected disability rated at 50% or greater or provide documentation showing status as a former Prisoner of War or Medal of Honor recipient status along with a copy of the veteran's California Driver's License and a completed DPR Form DPR 619, found at www.parks.ca.gov/pages/737/files/dpr619.pdf.

Veterans may apply in person at:

Park Pass Sales Office

1416 9th Street, Room 114
Sacramento, CA 95814

Veterans may also apply by mail. Send completed applications and required documentation to:

California State Parks

Attn: Distinguished Veteran Pass Program
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

Please allow 4-6 weeks for processing. Once the pass is received, veterans may use it for reservations and applicable benefits. The pass holder is required to present the Distinguished Veteran Pass and a valid California Driver License or other suitable photo identification, along with any campsite reservation or tour ticket, and to pay any supplemental fees at the park.

BUSINESS LICENSE, TAX, AND FEE WAIVER

The Business License, Tax, and Fee Waiver benefit waives municipal, county, and state business license fees, taxes, and fees for veterans who hawk, peddle, or vend any goods, wares, or merchandise owned by the veteran, except spirituous, malt, vinous, or other intoxicating liquor, including sales from a fixed location.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Honorably discharged veterans who engage in sales (not services) activities may be eligible. Eligibility criteria will differ based upon local jurisdiction.

HOW DO I APPLY?

Bring proof of honorable discharge to the local appropriate county/city licensing authority.

Note: To ensure that these benefits are applicable to you, please consult with a tax specialist.

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS

California has two separate property tax exemptions: one for veterans and one for disabled veterans.

VETERANS EXEMPTION

The California Constitution provides a \$4,000 real property (e.g., a home) or personal property (e.g., a boat) exemption for honorably discharged veterans or the spouse or pensioned-parent of a deceased, honorably discharged veteran. Most persons, however, are disqualified from this exemption due to restrictions on the value of property a claimant may own. A person who owns property valued at \$5,000 or more (\$10,000 or more for a married couple or for the unmarried surviving spouse of a qualified veteran) is not eligible for this exemption. Thus, a veteran who owns a home would most likely not qualify for the veterans exemption.

DISABLED VETERANS EXEMPTION

The California Constitution and Revenue and Taxation Code Section 205.5 provides a property tax exemption for the home of a disabled veteran or an unmarried spouse of a deceased disabled veteran.

There is a basic \$100,000 exemption or a low-income (less than \$52,470) \$150,000 exemption available to a disabled veteran who, because of an injury incurred in military service:

- » is blind in both eyes; or
- » has lost the use of two or more limbs; or
- » is totally disabled as determined by the VA or by the military service from which the veteran was discharged.

An unmarried surviving spouse may also be eligible if the service person died as the result of a service-connected injury or a disease incurred while on active duty or as the result of active duty. In other words, a veteran may not have been eligible during his or her lifetime, but the surviving spouse may become eligible for the exemption upon the veteran's death.

Unlike the veterans exemption, the disabled veterans exemption has no personal wealth restriction. The exemption is only available on a veteran's principal place of residence. The home may only receive one property exemption. Thus, if a homeowners exemption has been granted on a property and the owner subsequently qualifies for the disabled veterans' exemption, the homeowners exemption should be cancelled to allow for the disabled veterans exemption as it provides the greater benefit.

The issues regarding these exemptions are complex, and the eligibility requirements are specific. Consult the local assessor's office for detailed requirements regarding these exemptions.

Note: Both exemption amounts are annually adjusted for cost of living index; as of January 1, 2013, the exemption amounts are \$122,128 and \$183,193, respectively.

HOW DO I APPLY?

Eligible veterans or surviving spouses may apply for an exemption at their local County Assessor's Office. A listing of County Assessor's Office may be found in the county government section of the telephone book or at www.boe.ca.gov/proptaxes/assessors.htm. Veterans may also request more information from their local County Veterans Service Office (pg. 163).

Note: To ensure that these benefits are applicable to you, please consult with a tax specialist.



**REGISTER WITH CALVET TO RECEIVE VETERAN
BENEFIT INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO YOUR NEEDS!**

Coming in 2014, myCalVet will provide veterans and their families the opportunity to create a customized profile, targeting the benefits, resources, and services available in their community and throughout the State.

WWW.CALVET.CA.GOV



HEALTHCARE



THE DISABLED VETERAN BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (DVBE) PROGRAM

The State of California established the Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) Program to help DVBEs compete more effectively for a portion of the State's contract dollars. It also promotes self-reliance for California's disabled veterans by offering them the opportunity to gain experience in business, while sharing their expertise with the citizens of California. The program provides a goal that, at a minimum, 3% of all state contract dollars be spent with certified disabled veterans.

To become a DVBE, a veteran must have received an honorable discharge, be at least a 10% service-connected disabled, and a California resident. Furthermore, the state requires a business be 51% owned by one or more California-resident disabled veterans. A DVBE may have its daily operations managed and controlled by one or more disabled veterans; the disabled veteran(s) who manages and controls the business is not required to be the disabled veteran business owners(s). The home office of the DVBE must be located in the United States: the office cannot be a branch or subsidiary of a foreign corporation, foreign firm, or foreign-based business. The business must be certified through California Department of General Services (DGS) as a DVBE.

As a certified DVBE, the firm is eligible for the DVBE Participation Program which:

- » May market to State agencies under GC Section 14838.5, the SB/DVBE Option described on the DGS website;
- » Is listed in the State's Internet Certified firm listing giving the firm more visibility and expanded business networking opportunities with State and Local Government Reciprocity partners and prime contractors;
- » Is now eligible for a DVBE incentive on applicable State contracts.

CERTIFY ONLINE

Certify online at www.getcertified.dgs.ca.gov. There is no charge for certification and the business can apply online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It takes only minutes if all the required financial information is at hand.

The certification process is the responsibility of DGS, Procurement Division (PD), and Office of Small Business and DVBE Services (OSDS). The OSDS is available to assist in completing the necessary documents and ensuring appointments are available in Sacramento for personal assistance. There is no cost involved with applying for certification. The firm may also qualify for a small business certification, which offers additional contracting benefits. To obtain DVBE certification, a firm must:

- » Complete the online application at www.getcertified.dgs.ca.gov;
- » Provide a copy of an Award of Entitlement (AOE) letter from the VA or the DoD, dated within six months of the date the application is submitted to OSDS (To obtain a copy of the AOE letter, call the VA at (800) 827-1000);
- » Other required support documents will be determined when completing the online STD Form 812. OSDS will provide assistance in this area.

For more information or help certifying, contact:

Office of Small Business and DVBE Services

707 3rd Street, 1st Floor, Room 400

West Sacramento, CA 95605

(916) 375-4940 or leave a message if after hours

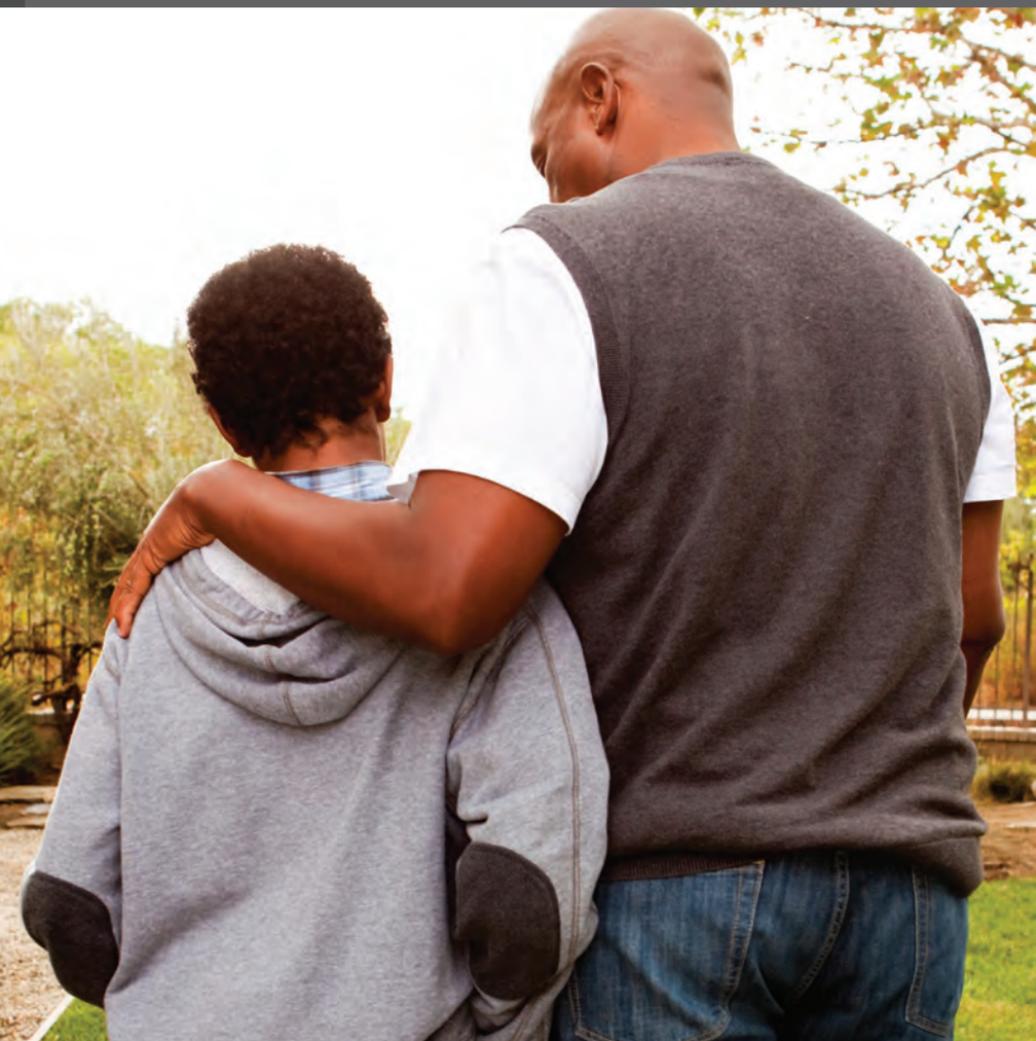
CalVet highly recommends all DVBEs also certify as a Small Business. To verify qualification as a small business, go to www.pd.dgs.ca.gov/smbus. When certifying, complete the small business form first. Upon completion, most of that information will be transferred over to the DVBE application.

COLLEGE TUITION FEE WAIVER FOR VETERAN DEPENDENTS

The College Tuition Fee Waiver for Veteran Dependents benefit waives mandatory system-wide tuition and fees at any State of California Community College, California State University, or University of California campus. This program does not cover the expense of books, parking or room and board. For eligibility requirements and more information, see Chapter 4: Education, page 101.

CHAPTER 2:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CLAIMS AND BENEFITS



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS INFORMATION AND REGIONAL OFFICES

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) mission is to provide benefits and services to veterans and their families in a responsive, timely and compassionate manner in recognition of their service to our Nation. Because of the wide variety of services the VA provides to veterans and their families, the department is structured into three main branches.

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is responsible for the administration and operation of over 1,400 community-based outpatient clinics, hospitals, medical centers, and long-term healthcare facilities that provide world-class healthcare to veterans of every era. For a listing of all VA healthcare facilities in California see page 90.

VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) is responsible for initial veteran registration, eligibility determination, and five key benefits and entitlements: Home Loan Guaranty, Insurance, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment, Education (GI Bill), and Compensation and Pension.

VA REGIONAL OFFICE LOCATIONS

Los Angeles Regional Office

Federal Building
11000 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90024
(800) 827-1000

Oakland Regional Office

1301 Clay Street, Room 1300
Oakland, CA 94612
(800) 827-1000

San Diego Regional Office

8810 Rio San Diego Drive
San Diego, CA 92108
(800) 827-1000

Oakland Regional Satellite Office- Sacramento

10365 Old Placerville Road
Sacramento, CA 95827
(916) 364-6500

NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION

The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) is responsible for honoring the military service of our Nation's veterans by providing a dignified burial and lasting memorial for veterans and eligible family members. The NCA maintains national cemeteries as national shrines, sacred to the honor and memory of those interred or memorialized there. To locate a VA National Cemetery, go to

www.cem.va.gov/cem/cems/listcem.asp.

DISABILITY COMPENSATION

Disability compensation is a monthly benefit paid to veterans for any injury, condition, or illness that started in or was exacerbated by active service in the military. This benefit is tax free and also can be paid to veterans disabled from treatment in a VA healthcare facility.

Veterans may be eligible for disability compensation if they have a service-connected disability, often referred to as "S/C", and were discharged under other than dishonorable conditions. A service-connected disability does not have to be a combat injury; any injury or illness suffered or aggravated while in uniform can be considered.

2013 VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION RATES FOR VETERANS

The dollar amount of benefits paid varies depending on the rating percentage of disability.

10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%
\$130.94	\$258.83	\$400.93	\$577.54	\$822.15	\$1,041.39	\$1,312.40	\$1,525.55	\$1,714.34	\$2,858.24

Note: Veterans with disability ratings of at least 30 percent are eligible for additional allowances for dependents, including spouses; minor children; children between the ages of 18 and 23 who are attending school; children who are permanently incapable of self-support because of a disability arising before age 18; and dependent parents. The additional amount depends on the disability rating and the number of dependents.

HOW DO I FILE A CLAIM?

STEP 1: FILE A CLAIM

The disability claim process begins when a claim is filed, either formally or informally. If a veteran has never filed a disability claim with the VA, we recommend that they file a fully developed claim where possible. If not, they must complete and submit a VA Form 21-526, Veteran's Application for Compensation or Pension. It is highly recommended that the veteran complete the form with the assistance of a veteran's representative. A County Veterans Service Office (pg. 163) can assist in obtaining compensation benefits.

If a claim was filed in the past, whether benefits were granted or denied, it is not a requirement to complete a VA Form 21-526 again. However, the VA does need a signed statement explaining what the veteran wants to claim, why, and where they were treated for the claimed condition. A VA Form 21-4138, Statement in Support of Claim, is normally used.

Please note that filing for veteran's benefits is a free service. Veterans should never have to pay a person or an organization to assist in filling out forms or advocating on behalf of the veteran. If a veteran is asked by a person or an organization for money in return for their services, please report them to the Veterans Affairs Inspector General hotline by phone at (800) 488-8244 (between 5:30a.m. to 1:00p.m. PST, Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays) or by e-mail at vaogh hotline@va.gov. Claimants may also write to the VA Inspector General hotline at:

VA Inspector General Hotline (53E)

810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20420

When a claim is filed with a Veterans Service Organization (VSO) or Veterans Service Representative (VSR), the claimant must sign a power of attorney (POA) which authorizes them to act on behalf of the claimant when preparing, presenting, and prosecuting the claim for any and all benefits from the VA. The claimant may, at any time through the claims process, revoke the POA with the VSO or VSR. Be aware that when a claimant signs a POA with a VSO or VSR, they are the only individuals authorized to assist. For example, if a claimant signs a POA with the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), the American Legion (AL) cannot legally research the status of the claim or act on behalf of the claimant.

STEP 2: OBTAIN EVIDENCE

Evidence must be submitted to support a disability claim. Evidence submitted at the time of filing will help expedite the claim. The disability evaluation will be based on the evidence provided so it is essential that the information submitted is accurate and complete. The VSO or VSR can assist by verifying service dates (based on the information furnished) and requesting the claimant's medical records.

The VA may request more information from the claimant. This may include letters detailing specific experiences in service or information on dependents, employment history, or income. Claimants can help speed the process by providing complete addresses for the medical care facilities that treated a claimant, being as exact as possible in reporting dates of treatment, and sending requested information as soon as possible.

STEP 3: GET A VA PHYSICAL EXAM

Often, the VA requests exams while waiting for other evidence to arrive. Sometimes, the VA reviews evidence to be certain it is requesting the proper exams. The exams the VA requests will depend on the claim and treatment history. The claimant's nearest VA Medical Center will schedule the requested exams and contact the claimant by mail and/or phone to let them know what exams are scheduled and when. After each exam, an examination report will be prepared and sent to the VA for review. Claimants can expedite this process by keeping exam appointments and by asking private medical providers to send copies of the claimant's records to the VA office right away. Claimants are asked to remind the private medical providers to include the VA file number on the records that they submit.

STEP 4: THE VA RATES COMPLETE RECORD

The VA places a claimant's records in their claims folder as they are received. The claim is ready to be rated when the VA has received all necessary evidence. The VA evaluates all the medical evidence and other documents to support the medical condition and identifies how these conditions correspond to the rating schedule. This schedule, based on Congressional law, designates which disabilities can be compensated for and at what percentage. The VA will pay the maximum benefit allowed by law based on the evidence submitted. If there is a change in disability after a claimant has filed a claim, or if the claimant wants

the VA to evaluate additional disabilities, the claimant should let their veteran representative know as soon as possible.

STEP 5: THE VA MAKES A DECISION

After the rating is completed, the VA will notify the claimant of the decision made and provide the reasons for all decisions to grant or deny benefits. If the claimant does not agree with the VA's decision, they should use the appeal process. If a claimant has questions about their claim, they may call the VA at (800) 827-1000 toll free.

A number of factors (including, but not limited to, new Agent Orange presumptive diseases, better wounded warrior survival rates, the return of millions of deployed troops, and restructuring of the Military) have significantly increased the volume and processing time of compensation and pension claims. Some claimants have had to wait as long as two years for their claim to be processed.

CalVet is working with the VA to reduce the backlog by reviewing long-pending claims of California veterans to ensure they are fully developed and ready to rate.

WHAT CAN VETERANS DO TO HASTEN THEIR CLAIM PROCESSING?

- » Be as thorough as possible when completing the claim application;
- » **NEVER** assume the VA has the necessary information on file;
- » **ALWAYS** sign the application form;
- » Include the VA file number on every page of correspondence or documentation submitted to the VA;
- » Respond quickly and completely to VA requests for additional information;
- » Keep medical appointments scheduled;
- » Notify the VA facility that made the appointment if unable to keep it and reschedule as soon as possible;
- » If the veteran has been treated for a disability by private medical providers, ask them to send copies of the treatment record to the VA and include the VA file number;
- » Include the veteran's complete mailing address (with apartment number, if applicable) and, if possible, a daytime phone number (with area code) with any application or correspondence submitted;
- » Notify the VA immediately if a mailing address or phone number changes;

If in doubt about what to do at any time, call the VA at (800) 827-1000. Have the VA file number available to give to the person who offers assistance. If unable to locate the VA file number, have the veteran's social security number available. Surviving family members of a veterans, should have the veteran's social security number available.

WHAT IF A CLAIM IS DENIED OR THE CLAIMANT DISAGREES WITH THE DECISION?

If the VA denies a disability claim, the claimant may appeal the decision. A claimant may also appeal if the claim was approved, but the claimant disagrees with the percentage evaluation received, or the claimant thinks the effective date is inappropriate.

An appeal of a local decision involves many steps (some optional and some required) and strict time limits. In sequence, the steps are:

- 1. Notice of Disagreement (NOD)**
- 2. Statement of the Case (SOC)**
- 3. Formal Appeal (VA Form 9 or equivalent)**
- 4. Hearings (Optional)**
- 5. Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA)**
- 6. United States Court of Appeals for Veterans' Claims (CAVC)**

The case may also involve remands at the BVA and/or Court of Veterans Appeals (COVA) levels. A claimant may have several appeals at once, and several issues may be included in the same appeal. Usually, all issues on one VA decision will be included in the same appeal.

1. NOTICE OF DISAGREEMENT

A Notice of Disagreement (NOD) is a written statement that a claimant disagrees with a decision the VA made regarding their claim. When submitting an NOD:

- » Claimants must be specific about their disagreement. If decisions were made on multiple items, claimants must be clear about which item they are addressing, and the NOD should be submitted on VA form 21-0958;
- » A NOD can be accepted only if a final decision was made. Before benefits can be reduced or denied, the VA must send a "pre-determination notice." If a claimant did not receive paperwork describing the appeals process (VA Form 4107), check the letter to see if it is, in fact, a pre-determination notice;

- » Check the time limit. A NOD must be filed within one year of the date of the letter informing the claimant of the final VA decision. If a claimant has missed the filing deadline, they may file another claim for the same condition or request that the previous claim be re-opened.

2. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

A Statement of the Case (SOC) is a summary of the evidence considered, actions taken, decisions made, and the laws governing the decision. A SOC must be done when a NOD is filed or when new evidence is received, and the VA does not overturn the decision on appeal with full grant of benefits sought. Once the first SOC is completed on an appeal, subsequent SOCs are considered Supplemental Statements of the Case (SSOC). An appeal may have several SSOCs.

3. FORMAL APPEAL (VA FORM 9 OR EQUIVALENT)

An appeal must be formal before it can continue to higher levels. The standard form for formalizing (sometimes called perfecting) an appeal is the VA Form 9, Appeal to Board of Veterans' Appeals. This form must be received no later than one of these two dates:

- » one year from the date of the letter notifying the claimant of the decision
- » 60 days after the date of the Statement of the Case

4. HEARINGS (OPTIONAL)

Hearings provide an opportunity for claimants to present evidence in person; they are optional. Hearings are held at the VA Regional Office by a Decision Review Officer (DRO). The DRO will review the evidence and testimony and make a decision on the case. If the issue is not resolved in the claimant's favor, the appeal will continue.

5. BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS (BVA)

The Board of Veterans Appeals, located in Washington DC, is the highest appellate body in VA. Although most decisions are made in Washington, BVA does have travel boards that come to local offices. Because travel boards have been limited in the past couple of years, the pending workload at BVA has dramatically increased. It is not unusual for an appeal to take 2 years or more from the initial NOD to the final BVA decision.

BVA looks at all of the evidence regarding the issue under appeal. If BVA decides that more information is needed to make a decision, it will issue a remand to the

local office. BVA will not reconsider the case until its instructions in the remand are done. If the evidence is sufficient, BVA will issue a decision. This is the final VA decision and the end of the appeal process. However, a BVA decision can be reviewed by the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans' Claims (CAVC) if an appeal to the court is filed within 120 days of the BVA decision.

6. UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS' CLAIMS (CAVC)

The United States Court of Appeals for Veterans' Claims (CAVC), located in Washington DC, reviews matters of law regarding VA benefits and decisions. CAVC is not part of the VA; it is an appellate court in the U.S. judicial system. CAVC will only consider decisions made by the Board of Veterans Appeals after 1988. As in most courts, one must have either an attorney or personal knowledge of legal proceedings to file the correct legal paperwork and conduct the appeal. CAVC decisions usually concern the procedural, legal issues involved in the "letter of the law". The deadline for filing an appeal to CAVC is 120 days after the BVA decision (using the date of the letter to the claimant informing them of the decision).

SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING GRANTS

Certain veterans and service members with service-connected disabilities may be entitled to grants from the VA to help build a new specially adapted house, to adapt a home they already own, buy a house and modify it to meet their disability-related requirements, or apply the grant against the unpaid principal mortgage balance of an adapted home already acquired without the assistance of a VA grant.

ELIGIBILITY FOR UP TO \$67,555 - SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING (SAH) GRANT

The VA may approve a maximum of three grants, up to the maximum dollar amount allowable. In certain instances, the full grant amount may be applied toward remodeling costs. Veterans and service members must be determined eligible to receive compensation for permanent and total service-connected disability due to one of the following:

1. Loss or loss of use of both lower extremities, such as to preclude locomotion without the aid of braces, crutches, canes or a wheelchair.
2. Loss or loss of use of both upper extremities at or above the elbow.



3. Blindness in both eyes, having only light perception, plus loss or loss of use of one lower extremity.
4. Loss or loss of use of one lower extremity together with (a) residuals of organic disease or injury, or (b) the loss or loss of use of one upper extremity which so affects the functions of balance or propulsion as to preclude locomotion without the use of braces, canes, crutches or a wheelchair.
5. Certain severe burn injuries.
6. The loss or loss of use of one or more lower extremities due to service on or after September 11, 2001, which so affects the functions of balance or propulsion as to preclude ambulating without the aid of braces, crutches, canes or wheelchair.

ELIGIBILITY FOR UP TO \$13,511 - SPECIAL HOUSING ADAPTATION (SHA) GRANT

The VA may approve a grant for the cost, up to a maximum of \$13,511, for necessary adaptations to a veteran's or service member's residence or to help them acquire a residence already adapted with special features for their disability, to purchase and adapt a home, or for adaptations to a family member's home in which they will reside. To be eligible for this grant, veterans and service members must be entitled to compensation for permanent and total service-connected disability due to one of the following:

1. Blindness in both eyes with 20/200 visual acuity or less.
2. Anatomical loss or loss of use of both hands.
3. Certain severe burn injuries.
4. Certain severe respiratory injuries.

TEMPORARY RESIDENCE ADAPTATION (TRA)

An additional temporary grant may be available to SAH/SHA eligible Veterans and Service members who are or will be temporarily residing in a home owned by a family member. The maximum additive TRA amount available to adapt a family member's home for the SAH grant is \$29,657 and for the SHA grant is \$5,295.

AUTOMOBILE ALLOWANCE

Veterans and service members may be eligible for a one-time payment of not more than \$18,900 toward the purchase of an automobile or other conveyance if they have certain service-connected disabilities.

Certain service members and veterans may also be eligible for adaptive equipment, and for repair, replacement, or reinstallation required because of disability or for the safe operation of a vehicle purchased with VA assistance. To apply, please call (800) 827-1000 or visit the nearest VA Medical Facility (pg. 90).

CLOTHING ALLOWANCE

Veterans who have unique clothing needs as a result of a service-related disability or injury may receive a supplement to their disability compensation. The clothing allowance reimburses veterans if their clothing gets permanently damaged by a prosthetic or orthopedic appliance they wear, or by a prescribed medication used on the skin. If eligible, a veteran can receive a one-time or yearly allowance for reimbursement. To apply, please contact the prosthetic representative at the nearest VA Medical Facility (pg. 90).

PENSION

Pension is a benefit paid to wartime veterans age 65 or older who have limited or no income. Wartime veterans who are under 65 years of age are eligible if they are permanently and totally disabled for reasons not related to their military service and not of their own willful misconduct. This is known as a non-service connected disability.

QUALIFYING WARTIME SERVICE

Generally, a veteran must have at least 90 days of active duty service, with at least one day during a wartime period to qualify for a VA Pension. Generally, a veteran who entered active duty after September 7, 1980, must have served at least 24 months or the full period for which the veteran was called or ordered to active duty (with some exceptions), with at least one day during a wartime period.

To view a complete listing of beginning and ending dates of each war period starting with World War II, see the 'Healthcare' section (pg. 59).

In addition to meeting minimum service requirements, the veteran must be:

- » Age 65 or older; or
- » Totally and permanently disabled; or
- » A patient in a nursing home receiving skilled nursing care; or
- » Receiving Social Security Disability Insurance; or
- » Receiving Supplemental Security Income.

WHAT IS CONSIDERED PERMANENTLY AND TOTALLY DISABLED?

- » A patient in a nursing home for long-term care because of a disability; or
- » Disabled, as determined by the Commissioner of Social Security for purposes of any benefits administered by the Commissioner; or
- » Unemployable as a result of disability reasonably certain to continue throughout the life of the person; or
- » Suffering from:
 - » Any disability which is sufficient to render it impossible for the average person to follow a substantially gainful occupation, but only if it is reasonably certain that such disability will continue throughout the life of the person; or
 - » Any disease or disorder determined by VA to be of such a nature or extent as to justify a determination that persons suffering from that disease or disorder are permanently and totally disabled.

WHAT IS COUNTABLE INCOME FOR VETERANS PENSION ELIGIBILITY PURPOSES?

Most income received by the veteran and his or her dependents affects pension eligibility, including earnings, social security, disability and retirement payments, interest and dividends, and net income from farming or business. The income limits are adjusted periodically.

There is no set limit on how much net worth a veteran and his dependents can have, but net worth cannot be excessive. The decision as to whether a claimant's net worth is excessive depends on the facts of each individual case. All net worth should be reported. The VA will determine if a claimant's assets are sufficiently large that the claimant could live off these assets for a reasonable period of time. The VA's needs-based programs are not intended to protect substantial assets or build up an estate for the benefit of heirs.

HOW DOES THE VA CALCULATE PENSION?

Annual pension is calculated by first totaling all of the veteran's countable income and then subtracting any deductions from that total. The remaining countable income is deducted from the appropriate annual income which is determined by the number of the veteran's dependents, if any, and whether or not the veteran is entitled to Housebound or Aid & Attendance benefits. This amount, divided by 12 and rounded to the nearest dollar establishes the veteran's monthly payment.

Veterans who are more seriously disabled may qualify for Aid & Attendance and Housebound benefits. These benefits may not be paid without eligibility for pension.

AID & ATTENDANCE AND HOUSEBOUND

Veterans and survivors who are eligible for a VA pension and require the aid and attendance of another person, or are housebound, may be eligible for additional monetary payment. These benefits are paid in addition to monthly pension, but they are not paid without eligibility for pension.

Since Aid and Attendance and Housebound benefit allowances increase the pension amount, those who are not eligible for a basic pension because they exceed allowable income limits may be eligible for pension at Aid and Attendance or Housebound rates. A veteran or surviving spouse may not receive Aid and Attendance and Housebound benefits concurrently.

AID & ATTENDANCE

The Aid & Attendance (A&A) monthly pension amount may be added to a veteran's monthly pension amount if they meet one of the following conditions:

- » The veteran requires the aid of another person in order to perform personal functions required in everyday living, such as bathing, feeding, dressing, attending to the wants of nature, adjusting prosthetic devices, or protecting themselves from the hazards of their daily environment;
- » The veteran is bedridden, in that the disability or disabilities requires the veteran to remain in bed apart from any prescribed course of convalescence or treatment;
- » The veteran is a patient in a nursing home due to mental or physical incapacity;
- » The veteran's eyesight is limited to a corrected 5/200 visual acuity or less in both eyes, or concentric contraction of the visual field is 5 degrees or less.

HOUSEBOUND

The Housebound monthly pension amount may be added to a veteran's monthly pension amount if the veteran is substantially confined to their immediate premises because of permanent disability.

HOW TO APPLY

The veteran may apply for A&A or Housebound benefits by visiting their local County Veterans Service Office (pg. 163). The veteran should include copies of any evidence, preferably a report from an attending physician, validating the need for A&A or Housebound type care.

- » The report should be in sufficient detail to determine whether there is disease or injury producing physical or mental impairment, loss of coordination, or conditions affecting the ability to dress and undress, to feed oneself, to attend to sanitary needs, and to keep oneself ordinarily clean and presentable.
- » Whether the claim is for A&A or Housebound benefits, the report should indicate how well the applicant gets around, where the applicant goes, and what he or she is able to do during a typical day. In addition, it is necessary to establish whether the claimant is confined to the home or immediate premises.



CEMETERY AND BURIAL BENEFITS

Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces residing in California are eligible to receive certain end of life privileges. For information about entitlements, contact the County Veterans Service Office (pg. 163) or call CalVet's Veterans Services Division at (877) 741-8532.

STATE CEMETERIES

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA VETERANS CEMETERY

The Northern California Veterans Cemetery (NCVC) is the first California Veterans Cemetery constructed with the cooperation of the US Department of Veterans Affairs, and is operated by the state. State Veterans Cemeteries are intended to serve areas that are not adequately served by a National Cemetery. NCVC, located near Redding, California, primarily serves the veteran population in the eighteen Northern-most California counties. The currently developed area of the cemetery provides sufficient burial space for more than thirty years. Beyond that, the cemetery has the capacity for expansion of space for well beyond 100 years. Any eligible veteran, along with their spouse and eligible dependents, may be interred at the cemetery.

The Yountville cemetery is located on 11 acres of oak-covered hills in the northwest corner of the Yountville Veterans Home; this historic cemetery marks the resting place of over 5,700 veterans and dependents. The cemetery currently

accepts only interment of the Veteran Homes' residents and their eligible dependents. Eligibility for interment is equivalent to the requirements for burial in a National Cemetery.

ELIGIBILITY FOR BURIAL

The VA has adopted regulations that establish the eligibility requirements for interment in a state veterans' cemetery. The regulations make the state eligibility requirements equivalent to the requirements for burial in a National Cemetery and provide for CalVet collection of information needed to determine eligibility.

For eligibility requirements, go to www.cem.va.gov.

ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION FORM

The Eligibility Determination/Pre-need Form is designed to assist in determining eligibility for burial in the NCVV on a pre-need basis. Pre-need determination allows a veteran to establish in advance, his/her eligibility for interment at the NCVV. There is no cost for pre-need determination, and it does not obligate the veteran to be interred at the cemetery.

Pre-need determination is intended to simplify and assist the veteran's next-of-kin at the time of death. There will be a \$500 interment fee for eligible spouses and dependent children at the time of need. Associated funeral expenses are incurred by the veteran and/or family.

The Eligibility Determination Form can be downloaded at www.calvet.ca.gov (Vet Services) or is available from the local County Veterans Service Office (pg. 163). Print and return the completed form, with copies of all supporting documentation (DO NOT send original documents), to:

Northern California Veterans Cemetery

P.O. Box 76

Igo, CA 96047

NATIONAL CEMETERIES

The VA's National Cemetery Administration maintains 131 national cemeteries in 39 states (and Puerto Rico) as well as 33 Soldier's lots and monument sites. There are nine national cemeteries in California, of which five (Riverside National Cemetery, Sacramento Valley VA National Cemetery, San Joaquin Valley National Cemetery, Miramar National Cemetery and Bakersfield National Cemetery) are presently accepting new interments. The other national cemeteries

in California are only accepting burials of family members of persons already interred, although Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery (near San Diego) still offers burial of cremated remains.

ELIGIBILITY FOR BURIAL

- » Persons eligible for burial in a national cemetery include:
- » Veterans;
- » Service members who die on active duty;
- » Certain Reservists and National Guard members;
- » World War II Merchant Mariners;
- » U.S. citizens who served honorably in the Armed Forces of an Allied government during a war
- » Such other persons or classes of persons as may be designated by either the Secretary of Veterans Affairs or the Secretary of the Air Force.

Additionally, the spouse and the children (as defined) of eligible persons are also eligible for burial in a national cemetery. In some cases, parents of active duty military killed in action may also be eligible.

BURIAL BENEFITS

Burial benefits may include the following: gravesites for casket or cremation remains, headstones or markers, opening and closing of the graves, and continued perpetual care. Burial of eligible veterans and dependents is at no cost when interred at a national cemetery.

Associated funeral expenses are the responsibility of the veteran and/or family. For assistance in completing applications for cemetery and burial benefits, please contact the local County Veterans Service Office (pg. 163).

MILITARY FUNERAL HONORS PROGRAM

Military funeral honors are available within the State of California for honorably discharged veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces.

WHAT TYPES OF MILITARY FUNERAL HONORS ARE AVAILABLE?

At minimum, two service representatives will render honors, sound taps, fold the flag and present it to the next of kin. Additionally, a detail to fire volleys, a chaplain, and/or a detail to serve as pall-bearers may be provided depending on the desires of the surviving family and resources available. Frequently, funeral honors are rendered in concert with a local Veteran Service Organization (VSO).

Note: The VSOs that may perform one or more of the above functions might include the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Marine Corps League, etc.

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT?

Family members of the deceased veteran should first notify their funeral director of their desire to have military funeral honors rendered at the service. The family should provide the funeral director with as much of the following as possible:

- » Name of Deceased;
- » Date of Birth;
- » Social Security Number;
- » DD Form 214 (Discharge Papers);
- » Other Proof of Veteran Status or Eligibility for Burial Honors.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Veterans are eligible for military funeral honors if they meet one of the following requirements:

- » Discharged from active duty under conditions other than dishonorable;
- » Completed at least one term of obligated service in the Selected Reserve under conditions other than dishonorable;
- » Enlisted on active duty at the time of death or in the Selected Reserve (drilling with a unit);
- » Discharged from the Selected Reserve due to disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty. The funeral director should contact one of the following Casualty Area Commands depending on the veteran's branch of service:



ARMY

(North of Fresno)
Fort Lewis, WA
(888) 634-7496

(Fresno & South of Fresno)
Fort Huachuca, AZ
(800) 248-0759



AIR FORCE

Travis AFB Mortuary Affairs
Military Honors
(800) 586-8402

Casualty Assistance/
Benefits
(866) 819-7250



MARINE CORPS
(866) 826-3628



NAVY
(800) 326-9631



COAST GUARD
(510) 437-5922

In the event the funeral director cannot make contact with one of the centers listed above, please contact:

Office of the Adjutant General
ATTN: Military Funeral
Honors Program
P.O. Box 269101
Sacramento, CA 95826-9101
(916) 854-3821

BURIAL AND PLOT-INTERMENT ALLOWANCES

VA burial allowances are partial reimbursements of an eligible veteran's burial and funeral costs. When the cause of death is non-service related, the reimbursements are generally described as two payments: (1) a burial and funeral expense allowance, and (2) a plot or interment allowance.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

A veteran may be eligible for a VA burial allowance if:

- » the veteran paid for a veteran's burial or funeral; and
- » the veteran has not been reimbursed by another government agency or some other source, such as the deceased veteran's employer; and
- » the veteran was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

In addition, at least one of the following conditions must be met:

- » the veteran died because of a service-related disability; or
- » the veteran was receiving VA pension or compensation at the time of death; or
- » the veteran was entitled to receive VA pension or compensation, but decided not to reduce his/her military retirement or disability pay; or
- » the veteran died while hospitalized by VA, or while receiving care under VA contract at a non-VA facility; or
- » the veteran died while traveling under proper authorization and at VA expense to or from a specified place for the purpose of examination, treatment, or care; or
- » the veteran had an original or reopened claim pending at the time of death and has been found entitled to compensation or pension from a date prior to the date of death; or
- » the veteran died on or after October 9, 1996, while a patient at a VA-approved state nursing home.

HOW MUCH DOES THE VA PAY?

- » **Service-Related Death:** The VA will pay up to \$2,000 toward burial expenses for deaths on or after September 11, 2001. If the veteran is buried in a VA national cemetery, some or all of the cost of transporting the deceased maybe reimbursed.
- » **Non-Service-Related Death:** The VA will pay up to \$300 toward burial and funeral expenses and a \$300 plot-interment allowance for deaths on or after December 1, 2001. As of October 2011, the burial and funeral expenses and

the plot allowance increase to \$722. If the death happened while the veteran was in a VA hospital or under VA contracted nursing home care, some or all of the costs for transporting the veteran's remains may be reimbursed. No plot allowance is paid to the family when the burial occurs in a national or state veterans cemetery.

To obtain information regarding associated funeral expenses are incurred by the veteran and/or family, contact the local County Veterans Service Office (pg. 163).

HOW TO APPLY

To apply for burial benefits, complete VA Form 21-530, Application for Burial Benefits. Attach a copy of the veteran's military discharge document (DD Form 214 or equivalent), death certificate, and funeral and burial bills. The bills should indicate they have paid them in full. The form can be downloaded at www.va.gov/vaforms or obtained from the local County Veterans Service Office (pg. 163).

PRESIDENTIAL MEMORIAL CERTIFICATES

A Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC) is an engraved paper certificate, signed by the current President, to honor the memory of honorably discharged deceased veterans.

The VA administers the PMC program by preparing the certificates which bear the current President's signature expressing the country's grateful recognition of the veteran's service in the U.S. Armed Forces. Eligible recipients include the next of kin and loved ones of honorably discharged deceased veterans. More than one certificate may be provided.

Eligible recipients, or someone acting on their behalf, may apply for a PMC in person at any VA regional office or by U.S. mail or toll-free fax. Requests cannot be sent via email. Enclose a copy of the veteran's discharge and death certificate to verify eligibility, as requests cannot be processed without proof of honorable military service. Submit copies only, as original documents will not be returned. To apply for a Presidential Memorial Certificate, or if a request was submitted more than eight (8) weeks ago was not fulfilled, complete the application and submit again.

Download VA Form 40-0247, Presidential Memorial Certificate Request Form, at www.va.gov/vaforms. Instructions on the PMC can be found at www.cem.va.gov/pmc.asp.

Mail applications to:

Presidential Memorial Certificates (41A1C)

5109 Russell Road
Quantico, VA 22134-3903
(800) 455-7143 (F)

Note: Presidential Memorial Certificates are automatically ordered for the families of veterans buried at national or state veterans cemeteries.

HEADSTONES AND MARKERS

The VA furnishes upon request, at no charge to the applicant, a government headstone or marker for the unmarked grave of any deceased eligible veteran in any cemetery around the world, regardless of their date of death.

For eligible veterans that died on or after November 1, 1990, the VA may also provide a head stone or marker for graves that are already marked with a private headstone or marker. When the grave is already marked, applicants will have the option to apply for either a traditional headstone or marker, or the new medallion. Eligible veterans are entitled to either a government-furnished headstone or marker, or the new medallion, but not both.

Flat markers in granite, marble, and bronze and upright headstones in granite and marble are available. The style chosen must be consistent with existing monuments at the place of burial. Niche markers are also available to mark columbaria used for inurnment of cremated remains.

When burial or memorialization is in a national cemetery, state veterans cemetery, or military post/base cemetery, a headstone or marker will be ordered by the cemetery officials based on inscription information provided by the next-of-kin or authorized representative.

Spouses and dependents are not eligible for a government-furnished headstone or marker unless they are buried in a national cemetery, state veterans cemetery, or military post/base cemetery.

Placement of headstones in a private cemetery may be ordered by completing VA Form 40-1330, Application for Standard Government Headstone or Marker. The application must be submitted by the next of kin or a representative, such as funeral director, cemetery official or veterans counselor, along with copies of veterans military discharge documents. Do not send original documents, as they will not be returned.

Types of Headstones and Markers Available:

- » Upright Marble or Upright Granite
- » Flat Granite or Flat Marble
- » Bronze
- » Niche Bronze
- » Veterans' Medallion (each Service has own medallion)

Applications can be mailed to:

Memorial Programs Services (41A1)

Department of Veterans Affairs

5109 Russell Road

Quantico, VA 22134-3903

Applications can also be sent by fax to (800) 455-7143. When using the toll free fax number, do not send a paper copy of the application through the mail.

Note: There is no charge for the headstone or marker itself; however, arrangements for placing it in a private cemetery are the applicant's responsibility and all setting fees are at private expense.

CEMETERY LOCATIONS

Bakersfield National Cemetery

Arvin, CA

Open to new casketed and cremation interments.

(866) 632-1845

Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery

San Diego, CA

Open to columbarium interment of cremated remains only.

(619) 553-2084

Golden Gate National Cemetery

San Bruno, CA

Closed to new burials.

(650) 589-7737

Los Angeles National Cemetery

Los Angeles, CA

Closed to new burials.

(Note: VA plans an extension of the facility for Columbarium interments only in 2012)

(310) 268-4675

(310) 268-4494

Miramar National Cemetery

San Diego, CA

Open to new casketed and cremation interments.

(619) 553-6593

Riverside National Cemetery

Riverside, CA

Open to new casketed and cremation interments.

(951) 653-8417

Sacramento Valley National Cemetery

Dixon, CA

Open to new casketed and cremation interments.

(707) 693-2460

San Francisco National Cemetery

San Francisco, CA

Closed to new burials.

(650) 589-7737

(650) 589-1646

San Joaquin Valley National Cemetery

Santa Nella, CA

Open to new casketed and cremation interments.

(209) 854-1040

Northern California Veterans Cemetery

Redding, CA

Open to new casketed and cremation interments.

(866) 777-4533

Yurok Tribal Veterans Cemetery

Klamath, CA

Open to casketed and cremation interments.

(707) 482-1350

DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is a monthly monetary benefit payable to the surviving dependents of a deceased veteran. Although it is usually a service-connected benefit, DIC may also be authorized for certain non-service-connected deaths. There is no minimum active duty service requirement for DIC claims; however, there may be a 90-day length-of-service requirement if the cause of death was a chronic disease.

DIC FOR SURVIVING SPOUSE AND CHILDREN

As with disability compensation for a veteran, DIC for a surviving spouse and/or surviving children is not income-based. It is the benefit payable if the veteran died while on active duty, in line of duty and not due to willful misconduct; or, when death was after service, if a service-connected disability either directly caused, or contributed substantially to and materially hastened, the veteran's death.

It is not required that service-connection have been established prior to the veteran's death for the condition which caused or contributed to death.

The rules and procedures for establishing service connection for a veteran's death are essentially similar to those for establishing a service-connected disability for a living veteran, with due consideration of the finality of the evidence in a death claim.

Since 1978, DIC has been payable as if the death were service-connected when a veteran who had been rated totally disabled from service-connected causes (whether 100% or by reason of individual unemployability) for ten continuous years or longer at the time of death dies from any cause other than willful misconduct. If the veteran was out of service less than ten years, DIC is payable if a total disability rating was in effect for a period of at least five continuous years, from the date the veteran left service to the date of death. Since November 30, 1999, DIC is payable to the surviving spouse and/or children of a former prisoner of war who was rated totally disabled from service-connected causes for at least one year at the time of death, and who died from any cause (other than willful misconduct) after September 30, 1999.

DIC is also payable as if the death were service-connected, if the veteran dies as a result of VA examination, hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, Vocational Rehabilitation, or, since November 1, 2001, a program of Compensated Work Therapy; or if a disability arising from such circumstances either directly causes, or contributes substantially to and materially hastens, the veteran's death.

DIC rates payable for a surviving spouse and/or children are dependent on a number of factors, including when the veteran died and the number and status of any dependent children.

PAYMENTS FOR DEATHS AFTER JANUARY 1, 1993

Surviving spouses of veterans who died on or after January 1, 1993, receive a basic rate, plus additional payments for dependent children, for the aid and attendance of another person if they are patients in a nursing home or require the regular assistance of another person, or if they are permanently housebound. If the veteran was totally disabled for eight continuous years prior to death, surviving spouses may receive an additional \$233.

DIC PAYMENT RATES FOR SURVIVING SPOUSES

(Veterans who died on or after January 1, 1993)

ALLOWANCES	MONTHLY RATE
Basic Payment Rate	\$1,215
ADDITIONAL ALLOWANCES	MONTHLY RATE
If veteran was in receipt of or entitled to service-connected compensation rated totally disabled at the time of death for a period of 8 continuous years preceding the death and the surviving spouse was married to the veteran for those 8 years	\$258
Each Dependent Child	\$301
Aid and Attendance	\$301
Housebound	\$141

PAYMENTS FOR DEATHS PRIOR TO JANUARY 1, 1993

Surviving spouses of veterans who died prior to January 1, 1993, receive an amount based on the deceased's military pay grade.

DIC PAYMENT RATES FOR SURVIVING SPOUSES

(Veterans who died before January 1, 1993)

ENLISTED	RATE	WARRANT OFFICER	RATE	OFFICER	RATE
E-1	\$1,215	W-1	\$1,283	0-1	\$1,283
E-2	\$1,215	W-2	\$1,334	0-2	\$1,327
E-3	\$1,215	W-3	\$1,373	0-3	\$1,418
E-4	\$1,215	W-4	\$1,453	0-4	\$1,503
E-5	\$1,215			0-5	\$1,654
E-6	\$1,215			0-6	\$1,865
E-7	\$1,327			0-7	\$2,013
E-8	\$1,384			0-8	\$2,211
E-9	\$1,494			0-9	\$2,365
				0-10	\$2,784

The phrase "entitled to receive compensation" also means that if a total disability rating had been denied during the veteran's lifetime, the denial was either due to clear and unmistakable error, or new and material evidence in the form of additional relevant service records was submitted (either before or after the veteran's death) which would allow retroactive assignment of a total disability rating for the requisite period of time. The enhanced rate would not be payable if the spouse was not married to the veteran for the entire eight-year period or if the veteran had not applied for benefits (or if the veteran was out of service less than eight years at the time of death).

Additional amounts are also payable to or for a disabled surviving spouse who is housebound or who is in need of regular aid and attendance, as set out in 38 CFR § 3.351. Beginning January 1, 2005, a surviving spouse with one or more children under age 18 will be paid an additional \$301 per month for a transitional period of 24 months from the date entitlement to DIC begins or until the last child reaches age 18, whichever occurs first. This amount is in addition to any other DIC rates payable to the surviving spouse.

If there is an eligible surviving spouse, the veteran's minor children are considered to be additional dependents on the spouse's award. If the children are in the spouse's custody, they are included on the spouse's basic award. A child not in the spouse's custody will be paid his or her share of DIC on a separate award.

If there is no eligible surviving spouse, there are specified rates for the veteran's children, in equal shares, up to the time of each child's 18th birthday. Upon reaching age 18, each child attains independent entitlement to DIC without regard to whether there is an eligible surviving spouse. DIC may only be paid to or for a child after age 18 if the child is attending an approved educational institution or is determined to be permanently incapable of self-support (helpless). DIC for school attendance may not be paid concurrently with Dependents' and Survivors' Education Assistance under VA Chapter 35; however, if the child has been found to be "helpless," there is no restriction against concurrent payment, since in this case the DIC is not paid because of school attendance.

HOW DO I APPLY?

To apply, complete and submit the application for DIC for a surviving spouse and/or children using VA Form 21-534, Application for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, Death Pension and Accrued Benefits by a Surviving Spouse or Child. For assistance, contact the local County Veterans Service Office (pg. 163).

PARENTS' DIC

DIC may be payable to a veteran's surviving parent(s) if the veteran's death is service-connected or is compensable. Parents' DIC is income-based; however, the income limits are adjusted periodically. The adjusted limits are published in the "Notices" section of the Federal Register and are listed in Adjudication Manual M21-1, Part I, Appendix B. All of the parents' family income from all sources is counted unless specifically excluded. Medical and certain other expenses, paid by the parent and/or family and not reimbursed from any source, may be deducted from otherwise-countable income to reduce the levels used for determining pension rates payable.

A parent's marital status is not a factor in eligibility but does affect the applicable income limit(s): different income limits apply according to whether one or both parents survive and, if both, whether they are married to each other or have or have not remarried. Net worth is not a factor for parents' DIC.

Additional amounts are payable if one or both parents are in need of Aid and Attendance. If the amount of the total annual benefit payable is less than 4% of the maximum rate, payments will be made semi-annually unless monthly payments are specifically requested. When DIC has been (or will be) awarded, if either parent is awarded any amount from a judicial proceeding, settlement, or compromise by reason of the veteran's death, DIC payments to or for that parent must be withheld until the full amount of such award has been recovered.

The application for parents' DIC is VA Form 21-535, Application for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation by Parent(s). Please see the local County Veterans Service Office (pg. 163) for assistance. DIC claims from surviving dependent parents of veterans who die while on active duty are under the initial jurisdiction of VA Regional Office and Insurance Center (VAROIC) Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; all others are processed by the VA Regional Office which would have jurisdiction based on the veteran's address at time of death, or the Regional Office having jurisdiction for the address of the surviving spouse and/or children (if any).

ESTABLISHING DEPENDENCY

It is not required that a dependent have been recognized prior to the veteran's death. Note that in certain cases there are time limits for recognition of a surviving spouse for benefits purposes. In general, when the marriage occurred after service, the surviving spouse must have been married to the veteran for at least one year prior to the veteran's death, or for any length of time if a child was born of the marriage or was born to them before the marriage.

Alternatively, for service-connected deaths only, the marriage may have been for any length of time if it took place within fifteen years after the end of the period of service during which the condition which caused or contributed to the veteran's death was incurred or aggravated. For example, for a Vietnam-era veteran, the marriage would have to have been before May 7, 1990, fifteen years after the end of the Vietnam Era. There are no marriage length requirements if the marriage occurred while the veteran was in service, or before service, or if a married service member dies while on active duty.

Even if the marriage between the surviving spouse and the veteran cannot be recognized for VA purposes because of some legal impediment, it may still be “deemed valid” for VA benefits purposes providing several requirements are all met:

1. The purported marriage occurred one year or more before the veteran died or existed for any length of time if a child was born of the purported marriage or was born to them before such marriage;
2. The claimant entered into the marriage without knowledge of the impediment;
3. The claimant continuously cohabited with the veteran from the date of the marriage to the date of the veteran’s death; and
4. No claim has been filed by a legal surviving spouse who has been found entitled to gratuitous death benefits (other than accrued monthly benefits covering a period prior to the veteran’s death).

If the veteran and the surviving spouse had lived in a common-law relationship, then even if such relationship was not legally recognized in their state of residence, it also may still be “deemed valid” for VA benefits purposes if all of the above requirements are satisfied.

Remarriage of a surviving spouse generally terminates eligibility for DIC. Eligibility may be reestablished if the remarriage is terminated by death, divorce, or annulment. Beginning January 1, 2004, a surviving spouse age 57 or older who is eligible for DIC and related benefits and who remarries will not lose any eligibility because of such remarriage.

VETERANS BENEFITS TIMETABLE

Information for Veterans Recently Separated from Active Military Service.

BENEFITS AND SERVICES	TIME LIMIT	HOW TO APPLY
<p>DISABILITY COMPENSATION</p> <p>The VA pays monthly compensation to veterans for disabilities incurred or aggravated during military service. This benefit is not subject to federal or state income tax. Entitlement is established from the date of separation if the claim is filed within one year from separation. Generally, military retirement pay is reduced by any VA compensation received. Income from Special Separation Benefits and Voluntary Separation Incentives affects the amount of VA compensation paid.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit any VA office, call (800) 827-1000 or file at www.va.gov. You may also apply at your local County Veterans Service Office.
<p>DISABILITY PENSION</p> <p>This income-based benefit is paid to veterans with honorable war-time service who are permanently and totally disabled due to nonservice-connected disabilities or who are 65 or older.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit any VA office, call (800) 827-1000 or file at www.va.gov. You may also apply at your local County Veterans Service Office.
<p>MEDICAL</p> <p>The VA provides a wide range of healthcare services to veterans including treatment for military sexual trauma, and for conditions possibly related to exposure to Agent Orange, ionizing radiation, and other environmental hazards in the Persian Gulf. Generally, veterans must be enrolled in VA's Healthcare System to receive care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit any VA medical facility, call (877) 222-8387 or file at www.va.gov. You may also apply at your local County Veterans Service Office.
<p>COMBAT VETERANS</p> <p>The VA Provides free healthcare for veterans who served in a theater of combat operations after November 11, 1998, for any illness possibly related to their service in that theater.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » If discharged from active duty on or after January 28, 2003. » If discharged from active duty before January 29, 2003, and not enrolled as of January 28, 2008. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five years from date of discharge from active duty. • Until January 27, 2011. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit any VA medical facility, call (877) 222-8387 or file at www.va.gov. You may also apply at your local County Veterans Service Office.

BENEFITS AND SERVICES**TIME LIMIT****HOW TO APPLY****DENTAL**

Veterans may receive one-time dental treatment if they were not provided treatment within 90 days before separation from active duty. The time limit does not apply to veterans with dental conditions resulting from service-connected wounds or injuries.

• 180 days from separation.

• Visit any VA medical facility, call (877) 222-8387 or file at www.va.gov. You may also apply at your local County Veterans Service Office.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Up to 36 months of benefits.

• Montgomery GI Bill - Active Duty (Chapter 30) **OR**

• 10 years from release from last period of active duty. Limited extension available.

• Visit any VA office, call (888) 442-4551 or file at www.gibill.va.gov. You may also apply at your local County Veterans Service Office.

• Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33) **OR**

• 15 years from last discharge or separation. Limited extensions available.

• Montgomery GI Bill - Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606) **OR**

• 14 years from the date of eligibility for the program, or until released from the Selected Reserve or National Guard, whichever occurs first. Some extensions available if activated.

• Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP/Chapter 1607)

• No time limit as long as individual remains in the same level of the Ready Reserve from which called to active duty. There are exceptions for discharge due to disability or transfer from the Inactive Ready Reserve to the Selected Reserve. REAP participants who separated from the Selected Reserve after completing their service contract under other than dishonorable conditions are now eligible for REAP benefits for 10 years after they separated from the Selected Reserve.

BENEFITS AND SERVICES**TIME LIMIT****HOW TO APPLY****VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

VA helps veterans with service-connected disabilities prepare for, find, and keep suitable employment. For veterans with serious service-connected disabilities, the VA also offers services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible. Some of the services offered are: job search, vocational evaluation, career exploration, vocational training, education training, and rehabilitation service.

- Generally, 12 years from VA notice to veteran of at least a 10 percent disability rating.

- Visit any VA office, call (800) 827-1000 or file at www.va.gov. You may also apply at your local County Veterans Service Office.

HOME LOAN

Veterans with qualifying service are eligible for VA home loan services, including guaranteed loans for the purchase of a home, manufactured home, manufactured home and lot, certain types of condominiums, or to build, repair, and improve homes. Certain disabled veterans can receive grants to have their homes specially adapted to their needs. Native Americans living on Trust Land may qualify for a direct home loan.

- None.

- Visit any VA office or call (800) 827-1000.

LIFE INSURANCE

- » SGLI (Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance) is low-cost life insurance for servicemembers and reservists. It is available in \$50,000 increments up to a maximum of \$400,000. SGLI coverage begins when the service member enters service or changes duty status.

- Coverage continues for 120 days from date of separation or up to one year if totally disabled at the time of separation from service.

- Visit any VA Insurance Center or call (800) 419-1473.

- » Traumatic Injury Protection under Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (TSGLI) is a traumatic injury protection rider under Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) that provides for payment to any member of the uniformed services covered by SGLI who sustains a traumatic injury that results in certain severe losses. TSGLI is retroactive for members who sustain a qualifying loss as a direct result of injuries incurred on or after October 7, 2001, through November 30, 2005, in Operation Enduring Freedom

- Coverage continues through midnight of the date of discharge, but member/veteran generally has up to two years from the date of the loss to apply for payment.

BENEFITS AND SERVICES**TIME LIMIT****HOW TO APPLY****LIFE INSURANCE (CONT'D)**

or Operation Iraqi Freedom, regardless of whether they had SGLI coverage. TSGLI pays a benefit of between \$25,000 and \$100,000 depending on the loss directly resulting from the traumatic injury. In order for a veteran to qualify for a TSGLI payment, they must have incurred a qualifying loss as a result of a traumatic event that occurred while they were in the service.

- ▶ VGLI (Veterans' Group Life Insurance) is lifetime renewable term life insurance for veterans. It is available in increments of \$10,000 up to \$400,000 but cannot exceed the amount of SGLI coverage in force at the time of the service member's separation from service. Premiums are age-based.
 - ▶ FGLI (Family Group Life Insurance) is life insurance that provides automatic coverage to the spouse and children of servicemembers insured under SGLI. Spousal coverage is available up to a maximum of \$100,000, but may not exceed the service member's coverage amount. Premiums for spousal coverage are age based. Dependent children are automatically covered for \$10,000 for which there is no cost.
 - ▶ SDVI (Service-Disabled Veterans' Insurance), also called "RH" insurance, is life insurance for service-disabled veterans. The basic coverage is \$10,000. A \$20,000 supplemental policy is available if premium payments for the basic policy are waived due to total disability.
 - ▶ VMLI (Veterans' Mortgage Life Insurance) is mortgage protection insurance issued to those severely disabled veterans who have received grants for Specially Adapted Housing from VA. Maximum coverage of \$90,000.
- Must apply within 120 days of separation or 1 year and 120 days if proof of good health is provided. Those on the 2-year disability extension are automatically converted to VGLI at the end of the 2-year period.
 - Coverage terminates 120 days after service member is released from service. Spouse may convert to a commercial policy.
 - For basic, must apply within two years from date of notification of service-connected disability. For supplemental, must apply within one year of approval of waiver of premiums.
 - Must apply before age 70.

- Visit any VA Insurance Center or call (800) 419-1473.

BENEFITS AND SERVICES

TIME LIMIT

HOW TO APPLY

REEMPLOYMENT

The Department of Labor's website www.dol.gov contains information on employment and reemployment rights of members of the uniformed services.

- For military service over 180 days, must apply for reemployment with employer within 90 days from separation. Shorter periods to apply if service is less than 180 days.

- Contact your former employer.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

The unemployment compensation for ex-service members program is administered by the States as agents of the Federal government. The Department of Labor's website www.dol.gov contains links for each State's benefits.

- Limited time.

- Any State of California Employment Office (bring your DD Form 214).



**REGISTER WITH CALVET TO RECEIVE VETERAN
BENEFIT INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO YOUR NEEDS!**

Coming in 2014, myCalVet will provide veterans and their families the opportunity to create a customized profile, targeting the benefits, resources, and services available in their community and throughout the State.

WWW.CALVET.CA.GOV



EMPLOYMENT

CHAPTER 3: **HEALTHCARE**



VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTHCARE

The VA operates the nation's largest integrated healthcare system with more than 1,400 care sites including hospitals, community clinics, nursing homes, domiciliary, readjustment counseling centers, and various other facilities.

There are over 100 care sites in California alone!

BASIC ELIGIBILITY

A person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable may qualify for VA healthcare benefits. Reservists and National Guard members may also qualify for VA healthcare benefits if they were called to active duty (other than for training only) by a federal order and completed the full period for which they were called or ordered to active duty.

MINIMUM DUTY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible, veterans who enlisted after September 7, 1980, or who entered active duty after October 16, 1981, must have served 24 continuous months or the full period for which they were called to active duty. This minimum-duty requirement may not apply to veterans discharged for hardship, early out or a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.

Certain VA benefits require service during wartime. Under these laws, the VA recognizes the following war periods:

» **WORLD WAR II**

December 7, 1941 through December 31, 1946, inclusive. If the veteran was in service on December 31, 1946, continuous service before July 26, 1947 is considered World War II service.

» **KOREAN WAR**

June 27, 1950 through January 31, 1955, inclusive.

» **VIETNAM WAR**

February 28, 1961 through May 7, 1975, inclusive, in the case of a veteran who served in the Republic of Vietnam during that period. August 5, 1964 through May 7, 1975 is inclusive in all other cases.

» **GULF WAR**

August 2, 1990 through a date to be set by law or Presidential Proclamation.

ENROLLMENT

For most veterans, entry into the VA Healthcare System begins by applying for enrollment. While some veterans are not required to enroll due to their special eligibility status, all veterans—including those who have special eligibility—are encouraged to apply for enrollment. Enrollment helps the VA determine the number of potential veterans who may seek VA healthcare services and is a very important part of their planning efforts.

Note: Enrollment in the VA Healthcare System does not necessarily mean that a veteran has a service-connected disability.

To apply, complete VA Form 10-10EZ, Application for Health Benefits. This form can be obtained from any VA healthcare facility or regional benefits office, downloaded at www.va.gov/vaforms, or requested by calling (877) 222-VETS (8387) or contacting the County Veterans Service Office (pg. 163).

Once enrolled, veterans can receive treatment at a VA healthcare facility anywhere in the country. Veterans enrolled in the VA healthcare system are afforded privacy rights under federal law. The following four categories of veterans are not required to enroll, but are urged to do so to permit better planning of health resources:

- » Veterans with a service-connected disability of 50 percent or more;
- » Veterans seeking care for a disability the military determined was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, but which VA has not yet rated, within 12 months of discharge;
- » Veterans seeking care for a service-connected disability only;
- » Veterans seeking registry examinations (Depleted Uranium, Ionizing Radiation, Agent Orange, Gulf War/Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom veterans).

PRIORITY GROUPS

During enrollment, each veteran is assigned to a priority group. The VA uses priority groups to balance demand for VA healthcare enrollment with available resources. Changes in availability of resources may reduce the number of priority groups the VA can enroll. If this occurs, the VA will publicize the changes and notify affected enrollees. Priority groups are defined as follows:

GROUP 1

- » Veterans with VA service-connected disabilities rated 50% or more;
- » Veterans assigned a total disability rating for compensation based on employability.

GROUP 2

- » Veterans with VA service-connected disabilities rated 30% or 40%.

GROUP 3

- » Veterans who are former Prisoners of War (POW);
- » Veterans awarded the Purple Heart Medal;
- » Veterans awarded the Medal of Honor;
- » Veterans whose discharge was for a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty;
- » Veterans with VA service-connected disabilities rated 10% or 20%;
- » Veterans awarded special eligibility classification under Title 38, USC, § 1151, "benefits for individuals disabled by treatment or vocational rehabilitation."

GROUP 4

- » Veterans receiving increased compensation or pension based on their need for regular Aid and Attendance or by reason of being permanently housebound;
- » Veterans determined by VA to be catastrophically disabled.

GROUP 5

- » Veterans with a non-service connected disability and veterans with a non-compensable service-connected rating of 0%, whose annual income and/or net worth are not greater than the VA financial thresholds;
- » Veterans receiving VA Pension benefits;
- » Veterans eligible for Medicaid benefits.

GROUP 6

- » Compensable 0% service-connected veterans;
- » Veterans exposed to ionizing radiation during atmospheric testing or during the occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki;
- » Veterans who participated in Project 112/ Shipboard Hazard and Defense Program;

- » Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975;
- » Veterans who served in the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations between August 2, 1990 through November 11, 1998;
- » Veterans who served in a theater of combat operations after November 11, 1998, as follows:
 1. Veterans discharged from active duty on or after January 28, 2003;
 2. Veterans who served on active duty at Camp Lejeune for fewer than 30 days beginning January 1, 1957 and ending December 31, 1987.

GROUP 7

- » Veterans with income and/or net worth above the VA national income threshold and income below the geographic income threshold who agree to pay copayments.

GROUP 8

- » Veterans with gross household incomes:
 1. Above the VA Means Test thresholds who were enrolled as of January 16, 2003, and who agreed to pay the applicable copayment; or
 2. Not exceeding the VA Means Test thresholds or geographic means test income thresholds by more than 10% and who agree to pay the applicable copayment—effective June 15, 2009.

Note: To ensure the availability of quality and timely healthcare to veterans with service-connected conditions, special authority based on military service, low income, and those with special healthcare needs, the VA made the difficult decision to stop enrolling new Priority Group 8 (high income) veterans whose income exceeded VA income thresholds in January 2003. The new regulations went into effect on June 15, 2009, that enabled the VA to relax income restrictions on enrollment for healthcare benefits. While this new provision does not remove consideration of income, it does increase income thresholds. Veterans may be eligible for enrollment under this new provision.

FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

Most veterans not receiving VA disability compensation or pension payments must provide information on their gross annual household income and net worth to determine whether they are below the annually adjusted financial thresholds. Veterans who decline to disclose their information or have income above the thresholds must agree to pay copayments in order to receive certain health

benefits, effectively placing them in Priority Group 8. Currently, the VA is not enrolling new applicants who decline to provide financial information unless they have a special eligibility factor.

This financial assessment includes all household income and net worth including Social Security, retirement pay, unemployment insurance, interest and dividends, workers' compensation, black lung benefits, and any other income. Also considered are assets such as the market value of property that is not the veteran's primary residence, stocks, bonds, notes, individual retirement accounts, bank deposits, savings accounts, and cash.

The VA also compares the veteran's financial assessment with geographically-based income thresholds. If the veteran's gross annual household income is above the VA's national means test threshold and below VA's geographic means test threshold, or is below both the VA national threshold and the VA geographically based threshold, but their gross annual household income plus net worth exceeds VA's ceiling (currently \$80,000), the veteran may be eligible for Priority Group 7 placement and qualify for an 80% reduction in inpatient copayment rates.

The income threshold table can be found at www.va.gov/healtheligibility.

RECENTLY DISCHARGED COMBAT VETERANS

Every VA Medical Center has a team ready to welcome OEF/OIF service members and help coordinate their care.

Combat veterans who served in a theater of combat operations after November 11, 1998, are eligible for enrollment in Priority Group 6, unless eligible for a higher Priority Group. These veterans are not charged copayments for medications and/or treatment of conditions that are potentially related to their combat service. Veterans who enroll with the VA under this enhanced authority will continue to be enrolled even after their enhanced eligibility period ends, although they may be shifted to Priority Group 7 or 8 depending on their income level, and required to make applicable copayments.

Combat veterans discharged from active duty on or after January 28, 2008, are eligible for this enhanced enrollment health benefit for five years after the date of their most recent discharge from active duty.

For more information about the various programs available for recent returning service members, go to the Returning Service Members website at www.oefoif.va.gov.

HOME IMPROVEMENTS AND STRUCTURAL ALTERATIONS

The VA provides up to \$6,800 lifetime benefit for service-connected veterans and up to \$2,000 for non-service-connected veterans to make home improvements necessary for the continuation of treatment or for disability access to the home and essential lavatory and sanitary facilities.

Home Improvement and Structural Alterations grants provide for medically necessary improvements and/or structural changes to the veteran's residence for the following purposes:

1. Allowing entrance to or exit from the veteran's residence;
2. Use of essential lavatory and sanitary facilities;
3. Allowing accessibility to kitchen or bathroom sinks or counters;
4. Improving entrance paths or driveways in immediate area of the home to facilitate access to the home by the veteran;
5. Improving plumbing or electrical systems made necessary due to installation of dialysis equipment in the home.

For application information, please contact the prosthetic representative at the nearest VA Medical Facility (pg. 90).

EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE IN U.S. NON-VA FACILITIES

In the case of medical emergencies, the VA may reimburse or pay for non-VA medical care not previously authorized that is provided to certain eligible veterans when the VA or other federal facilities are not feasibly available. This benefit may be dependent upon other conditions, such as notification to the VA, the nature of treatment sought, the status of the veteran, the presence of other healthcare insurance, and third party liability.

There are different regulatory requirements that may affect VA payment and veteran liability for the cost of care; therefore, it is very important that the nearest VA medical facility that provides emergency services is notified as soon as possible after emergency treatment is sought. If emergency inpatient services are required, the VA will assist in transferring the veteran to a VA facility, if available. For additional information, contact the nearest VA medical facility (pg. 90).

ONLINE ACCESS TO VA HEALTH INFORMATION AND SERVICES

My HealtheVet offers veterans, active duty service members and their dependents, and caregivers anywhere, anytime access to VA healthcare information and services via the internet. My HealtheVet is a free, online personal health record that allows veterans to become more informed by accessing trusted and secure health and benefits information at their convenience.

With My HealtheVet, veterans can access:

- » VA prescription refill services
- » VA benefits services
- » Local VA events activities
- » Personal health journals
- » Vitals tracking graphing
- » Military health history
- » Activity/food journals
- » Healthy living centers
- » VA news feature stories
- » Disease condition centers
- » Trusted health information

To register, go to www.myhealth.va.gov, and begin making more informed decisions in collaboration with healthcare providers.

VETERANS IDENTIFICATION CARD

The VA provides eligible veterans a Veterans Identification Card (VIC) for use at VA Medical Facilities. The VIC protects the privacy of veterans' sensitive information, as it no longer displays the social security number or date of birth on the front of the card. The VIC will only display the veteran's name, picture, and special eligibility indicators such as service-connected disabled, Purple Heart, and Former POW, if applicable, on the front of the card. Only veterans who are eligible for VA medical benefits will receive the card.

For additional information on VA healthcare, go to www.va.gov/health. To locate a VA Medical Center, Outpatient Clinic, or Vet Center, see (pg. 90).

CAREGIVER PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The VA has long advocated for caregivers as vital partners in providing care worthy of the sacrifices by America's veterans and service members. Each VA Medical Center contains a designated caregiver support point of contact to coordinate caregiver activities and serve as a resource expert for veterans, their families, and VA providers. Several programs are available for all veteran caregivers including:

- » **In-Home and Community Based Care:** Skilled home healthcare, homemaker/home health aide services, community adult day healthcare and home based primary care;
- » **Respite Care:** Designed to relieve the family caregiver from the constant burden of caring for a chronically ill or disabled veteran at home. Services can include in-home care, a short stay in an institutional setting or adult day healthcare;
- » **Caregiver Education and Training Programs:** Multiple training opportunities which include pre-discharge care instruction and specialized caregiver programs in multiple severe traumas such as Traumatic Brain Injury, spinal cord injury/disorders, and rehabilitation for the blind. The VA has a caregiver assistance healthy living center on My HealtheVet; www.myhealth.va.gov, as well as caregiver information on the VA's health page, www.va.gov/health/default.asp. Both websites include information on VA and community resources and caregiver health and wellness;
- » **Family Support Services:** Face-to-face and telephone support groups, that can include family counseling, spiritual and pastoral care, family leisure and recreational activities and temporary lodging in Fisher Houses;
- » **Other Benefits:** Durable medical equipment and prosthetic and sensory aides to improve function, financial assistance with home modification to improve access and mobility, and transportation assistance for some veterans to and from medical appointments.

President Barack Obama signed the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 into law. Title I of the Act will allow the VA to provide unprecedented benefits to eligible caregivers who support the veterans who have given so much for this Nation. The law distinguishes between veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury or illness in the line of duty on or after September 11, 2001 (post-9/11 veterans), and those veterans whose injuries or illnesses were incurred prior to September 11, 2001 (pre-9/11 veterans). Pre- and post-9/11 veteran caregivers are eligible for the following benefits:

- » General caregivers for both pre- and post-9/11 veterans may be eligible to receive training in how to provide caregiver services, counseling and other services, and information about supportive services available from other public, private and non-profit agencies in person and online;
- » Family caregivers may be eligible for all general caregiver benefits and for ongoing technical support, counseling, lodging, subsistence, and travel benefits;
- » Primary caregivers may be eligible to receive these same benefits, as well as a stipend, mental health services, and access to healthcare coverage, if they are not already entitled to care or services under a health plan contract, including Medicare, Medicaid or worker's compensation. Primary caregivers must be a family member or a person who resides with the veteran;
- » Respite services of not less than 30 days per year are made available to primary and family caregivers while attending appointments or undergoing caregiver training for post-9/11 veterans;
- » All caregivers of both pre- and post-9/11 veterans are eligible to receive respite care under the VA's existing program, which provides up to 30 days per year.

For more information on caregiver services, contact the Caregiver Support line at (855) 260-3274 or visit www.caregiver.va.gov. For answers to questions on caregiver eligibility or to apply for benefits, contact the VA Health Administration Center at (877) 733-7927 or www.va.gov/hac or contact the County Veterans Service Office (pg. 163).

DEPENDENTS AND SURVIVORS HEALTHCARE

HEALTH CARE BENEFITS

Under the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA), certain dependents and survivors can receive reimbursement for most medical expenses, including inpatient, outpatient, mental health, prescription medication, skilled nursing care, and durable medical equipment.

To be eligible for CHAMPVA, an individual cannot be eligible for TRICARE (the medical program for civilian dependents provided by DoD) and must be one of the following:

- » The spouse or child of a veteran who the VA has rated permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected disability;



- » The surviving spouse or child of a veteran who died from a service-connected disability or who, at the time of death, was rated permanently and totally disabled;
- » The surviving spouse or child of a veteran who died on active duty service and in the line of duty, not due to personal misconduct. However, in most of these cases, these family members are eligible for TRICARE not CHAMPVA.

A surviving spouse under age 55 who remarries loses CHAMPVA eligibility on midnight of the date of remarriage. They may re-establish eligibility if the remarriage ends by death, divorce, or annulment effective the first day of the month following the termination of the remarriage or December 1, 1999, whichever is later. A surviving spouse who remarries after age 55 does not lose eligibility upon remarriage. For those who have Medicare entitlement, CHAMPVA is secondary payer to Medicare. For more information, call (800) 733-8387 or go to www.va.gov/hac/forbeneficiaries/champva/champva.asp.

Many VA healthcare facilities provide services to CHAMPVA beneficiaries under the CHAMPVA In-house Treatment Initiative (CITI) program. Contact the nearest VA healthcare facility to determine if it participates. Those who use a CITI facility incur no cost for services; however, services are provided on a space-available basis after the needs of veterans are met. Not all services are available at all times. The coverage of services is dependent upon the CHAMPVA benefit coverage. CHAMPVA beneficiaries who are covered by Medicare cannot use CITI.

CHILDREN BORN WITH SPINA BIFIDA TO CERTAIN VIETNAM OR KOREAN VETERANS

The Spina Bifida (SB) program is a comprehensive healthcare benefits program for birth children of certain Vietnam and Korea veterans who have been diagnosed with SB (except Spina Bifida Occulta). The SB program provides reimbursement for medical services, pharmacy, durable medical equipment and supplies. For more information about SB healthcare benefits, call (888) 820-1756 or to go www.va.gov/hac/forbeneficiaries/spina/spina.asp.

CHILDREN OF WOMEN VIETNAM VETERANS (CWVV) BORN WITH CERTAIN BIRTH DEFECTS

The CWVV Health Care Program is a federal health benefits program for children of women Vietnam veterans born with certain birth defects. The CWVV Program provides reimbursement for medical care related to covered birth defects and conditions associated with the covered birth defect except for spina bifida. For more information about benefits for children with birth defects, call (888) 820-1756 or go to www.va.gov/hac/forbeneficiaries and select Spina Bifida/Children of Women Vietnam Veterans.

PRESUMPTIVE HEALTH CONDITIONS

Normally, claimants must show proof of relationship between service and the condition being claimed; however, the VA presumes that specific disabilities diagnosed in certain veterans were caused by their military service because of unique circumstances in that particular geographic location.

WHAT CONDITIONS ARE PRESUMED TO BE CAUSED BY MILITARY SERVICE?

Traditionally, there are three categories in which veterans may qualify for a service-connected disability based on a condition to be presumed by military service. These groups are veterans who were diagnosed with a chronic disease such as arthritis, diabetes, or hypertension within one year of being released from active duty; veterans diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, at any time after discharge or release from qualifying active service in which they have continuous service of 90 days or more; and veterans who served in the conflicts/geographic regions associated with those diagnosed conditions identified below:

FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR

1. Imprisoned for any length of time, and disability at least 10 percent disabling:
 - » Psychosis
 - » Any of the anxiety states
 - » Dysthymic disorder or depressive neurosis
 - » Cold injury
 - » Post-traumatic osteoarthritis
 - » Heart disease and complications
 - » Stroke and complications
 - » Osteoporosis, on or after October 10, 2008, when Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is diagnosed

2. Imprisoned for at least 30 days, and disability at least 10 percent disabling:
 - » Avitaminosis
 - » Beriberi
 - » Chronic dysentery
 - » Helminthiasis
 - » Malnutrition (including optic atrophy)
 - » Pellagra and any other nutritional deficiency
 - » Any other nutritional deficiency
 - » Irritable bowel syndrome
 - » Peptic ulcer disease
 - » Peripheral neuropathy, except where directly related to infectious causes
 - » Cirrhosis of the liver
 - » Osteoporosis, on or after September 28, 2009

VIETNAM ERA VETERANS (EXPOSED TO AGENT ORANGE)

Served in the Republic of Vietnam between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975; Blue Water Veterans; U.S. Navy and Coast Guard Ships in Vietnam; Korean Demilitarized Zone between April 1, 1968 and August 31, 1971; Thailand Military bases between February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975; Herbicide tests and storage outside Vietnam; and Agent Orange residue on airplanes used in the Vietnam war:

- » AL amyloidosis
- » Chloracne or other acne form disease similar to chloracne
- » Porphyria cutanea tarda
- » Soft-tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma or mesothelioma)

- » Hodgkin's disease
- » Multiple myeloma
- » Respiratory cancers (lung, bronchus, larynx, trachea)
- » Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- » Prostate cancer
- » Acute and sub-acute peripheral neuropathy
- » Type 2 diabetes
- » Chronic B-cell leukemia
- » Ischemic heart disease
- » Parkinson's disease

ATOMIC VETERANS (EXPOSED TO IONIZING RADIATION)

Participated in atmospheric nuclear testing; occupied or was a POW in Hiroshima or Nagasaki; service before February 1, 1992 at a diffusion plant in Paducah, KY, Portsmouth, OH, or Oak Ridge, TN; or service before January 1, 1974 at Amchitka Island, AK:

- » Leukemia (except for chronic lymphocytic leukemia)
- » Cancers of the bile ducts, bone, brain, breast, colon, esophagus, gall bladder, liver (primary site, but not if cirrhosis or hepatitis B is indicated), lung (including bronchiolo-alveolar cancer), pancreas, pharynx, ovary, salivary gland, small intestine, stomach, thyroid, urinary tract (kidney/renal, pelvis, urinary bladder, and urethra)
- » Multiple myeloma
- » Lymphomas (other than Hodgkin's disease)

GULF WAR VETERANS (UNDIAGNOSED ILLNESS)

Served in the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations during the Gulf War with condition at least 10 percent disabling by December 31, 2016. Included are medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illnesses defined by a cluster of signs or symptoms that have existed for six months or more, such as:

- » Chronic fatigue syndrome
- » Fibromyalgia
- » Functional gastrointestinal disorders
- » Any diagnosed or undiagnosed illness that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines warrants a presumption of service connection

Signs or symptoms of an undiagnosed illness include: fatigue, skin symptoms, headaches, muscle pain, joint pain, neurological symptoms, respiratory symptoms, sleep disturbance, GI symptoms, cardiovascular symptoms, weight loss, and menstrual disorders.

The VA also has regulations concerning presumptive service connection for certain diseases among service in Southwest Asia beginning on or after the start of the first Gulf War on August 2, 1990, through the conflict in Iraq and on or after September 19, 2001, in Afghanistan.

The area defined in Persian Gulf Service encompass Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the neutral zone between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea, and the airspace above these locations.

There are nine specific infectious diseases associated with military service during this period that are prevalent in Southwest Asia, have been diagnosed among U.S. troops serving there, and are known to cause long-term adverse health effects:

- » Brucellosis
- » *Campylobacter jejuni*
- » *Coxiella burnetii* (Q fever)
- » Malaria
- » *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*
- » Nontyphoid Salmonella
- » Shigella
- » Visceral leishmaniasis
- » West Nile virus

Veterans who have been diagnosed with any of the above conditions or were exposed to any herbicides throughout their military service should contact the local County Veterans Service Office (pg. 163) for assistance.

DEPLETED URANIUM

WHAT IS DEPLETED URANIUM?

Depleted Uranium (DU) is a byproduct of the uranium enrichment process that makes nuclear fuel. DU has approximately 60 percent of the radioactivity and the same chemical toxicity as natural uranium, which is present in small amounts in our environment and to which we are all exposed through our food and water. In the early 1960s, the U.S. began testing DU for projectile use because of its ability to penetrate armor made with less dense metals.

WHEN IS DEPLETED URANIUM HAZARDOUS?

DU is a chemical and radiation health hazard primarily if internalized, such as through embedded fragments, contaminated wounds, and inhalation or ingestion. When a projectile made with DU penetrates a vehicle, small pieces of DU are created that can scatter and become embedded in muscle and soft tissue. In addition to DU wounds, service members exposed to DU in struck vehicles may inhale or swallow small airborne DU particles. Simply riding in a vehicle with DU weapons or DU shielding will not expose a service member to significant amounts of DU or external radiation.

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF DEPLETED URANIUM

The potential for health effects from internal exposure is related to the amount of DU that enters a person's body. If DU enters the body, it may remain in the body. Studies show high doses may especially affect the kidneys. So far, no health problems associated with DU exposure have been found in veterans exposed to DU. Researchers and clinicians continue to monitor the health of these veterans. To learn more about results of medical and scientific research and other DU topics, go to the Department of Defense Depleted Uranium Library at fhp.osd.mil/du.

WHO MAY BE AT RISK?

Veterans who served in a combat zone after 1990 or in an area that DU was used may have been exposed. DU exposure has been divided into three categories:

1. **Level 1:** Personnel who were in, on, or near combat vehicles when they were struck by DU rounds or who entered immediately after to attempt rescue;
2. **Level 2:** Personnel who routinely entered DU-damaged vehicles or fought fires involving DU munitions;
3. **Level 3:** Personnel involved in all other DU exposures.

DEPLETED URANIUM FOLLOW-UP PROGRAM

A VA Depleted Uranium Follow-up Program has been established at the Baltimore VA Medical Center to study health effects of DU exposure and to provide recommendations for treatment, including surgical removal of embedded fragments. The program for veterans exposed to DU from embedded fragments involves detailed physical exams and clinical tests of organ system function.

In addition, a screening program for other veterans concerned about DU exposure during combat involves an exposure questionnaire and a mail-in, 24-hour urine test for DU.

Veterans who believe they were exposed to harmful Depleted Uranium conditions, such as being in a vehicle when it was struck by friendly fire or in a vehicle or building after it had been struck by friendly fire, and would like to be screened for DU exposure, contact the nearest VA Medical Center (pg. 90). They may be eligible to be awarded a service-connected disability. For information on the DU Follow-Up Program, go to www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/depleted_uranium/followup_program.asp.

HEARING LOSS AND TINNITUS

WHAT IS HEARING LOSS?

Hearing loss is damage to the ear(s) that impairs an individual's ability to perceive sound. The impairment ranges from mild hearing loss to total hearing loss and can either be temporary or permanent depending on the cause.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF HEARING LOSS?

There are three main forms of hearing loss: conductive hearing loss, sensorineural hearing loss and mixed hearing loss. Conductive hearing loss is caused by damage to the outer or middle ear and can usually be repaired or will heal over time, making it unlikely to result in total hearing loss. Sensorineural hearing loss is caused by damage to the inner ear (cochlea) or the retrocochlea nerves (nerves that connect the ear to the brain). Unlike conductive hearing loss, sensorineural hearing loss is often total and irreparable. Mixed hearing loss is a combination of conductive and sensorineural hearing loss. It can either be caused at once, or be caused by a buildup of ailments to the ear.



HOW ARE THE TYPES OF HEARING LOSS DIFFERENT?

Conductive hearing loss is usually caused by temporary factors. Many illnesses or some drugs, such as aspirin, can cause partial hearing loss as a symptom or a side-effect. Other causes can be foreign objects caught in the ear, malformation of the outer ear from birth or accident, tumors growing within the ear or even something as simple as a buildup of ear wax. Sensorineural hearing loss can be caused by the same things as conductive hearing loss. It can also be suffered after noise exposure, head trauma or simply the natural aging process. Mixed hearing loss is simply a combination of conductive and sensorineural hearing loss and can be caused by anything that would inflict both forms of hearing loss or be a compound of different sources.

WHAT CAN CAUSE MILITARY HEARING LOSS?

Two of the main causes of sensorineural hearing loss can be encountered commonly in the military. The first, head trauma, is the more unpredictable of the two because it is all but impossible to tell how the body will react. A single blow to the head can damage the ear, while multiple blows may cause no immediate damage to a person's hearing. The second cause, noise-induced hearing loss, is caused by sustained exposure to dangerous levels of sound. Anything at or above 85 decibels will eventually cause damage to the ear.

WHAT IS A DECIBEL?

A decibel is a measurement that determines the noise level of a sound. Decibels are measured by studying the amount of pressure a sound places on the ear drum, which then transmits them through the ear. In higher decibels, the amount

of pressure placed upon the ear can damage the sensitive hair cells of the inner ear. Once damaged, these cells cannot regrow or repair, so any damage incurred is permanent. It is important to note that the further an individual is from the noise source the lower a sound will be when it reaches the ear, so decibels are not exact measurements.

The following are decibel levels associated with common military noises. These are averages and will vary with distance, conditions and types of equipment.

OBJECT	DECIBEL
Recoilless Rifle	190
Heavy Artillery	185
Antitank Gun	182
Antitank Missile	166
Grenade (@50 Ft)	164
Pistol Fire	157
Rifle Fire	157
Machine Gun	155
Jet Engine (@100 M)	140
APC	120
Tank	115
Helicopter	105
Cargo Transport	88
Ambulance	85

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF HEARING LOSS?

Symptoms of hearing loss will vary depending on its cause. If an individual is suffering from hearing loss as a symptom of a disease, other symptoms may help determine its cause. A veteran who is using medication to treat a disease and notices a hearing loss should consult a doctor to determine whether changing to another medication or a lower dosage is appropriate. The main symptom of noise-induced hearing loss is tinnitus or a sudden decrease in sound perception. With head trauma, the symptoms can be the same as noise-induced hearing loss or a faint popping noise which signals damage to the ear drum.

WHAT IS TINNITUS?

Tinnitus is usually a symptom of noise-induced hearing loss. It typically manifests itself as a ringing in the ear, although it can sound like clicking, popping, snapping or whistling. One of the causes of tinnitus is damage to the nerves of the inner ear. If damaged enough, the nerves can become bent and constantly register sound input as they will be making continuous contact with the other hairs of the ear. In other cases, tinnitus can be caused by a tumor in the ear which allows the ear to hear the blood passing through the tumor.

HOW IS HEARING LOSS TREATED?

Sadly, most cases of hearing loss cannot be treated. When it is a symptom of a larger ailment, hearing loss can be recovered when the disease is treated. With noise-induced hearing loss or head trauma, the damage is usually permanent; however, technology has made it possible to compensate for hearing loss. A hearing aid can be used to mimic the outer and middle ear if they are damaged. For the cochlea (inner ear), a cochlear implant can mimic the nerves that are damaged and relay sound to the brain.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I SUFFER FROM HEARING LOSS?

Veterans who have experienced hearing loss or suffer from tinnitus should contact their local County Veteran Service Office (pg. 163) to file a claim for compensation. If awarded a disability rating, the veteran may be eligible for monthly compensation and hearing aids, repairs, and future batteries could all be provided at no charge.



MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mental health is essential to overall health. Everyone has had some experience with feeling depressed, anxious, or overwhelmed emotionally, but if these feelings persist they can be a sign of a deteriorating mental health. Left untreated, mental health problems can interfere with daily life, relationships, work, normal functioning, and cause pain for both the person with the disorder and those who care about them.

Before, during, or after deployment, some service members may experience mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury, or suicidal thoughts.

The good news is that most mental health problems, even severe cases, are treatable. Mental health services are available for anyone who has mental health concerns or just needs to talk with someone.

Note: The provider details below may not be inclusive of services in your area. Please consult with your County Veteran Service Office or County Mental Health Agency for additional resources.

U.S. DEPT. OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The VA places a priority on early detection and intervention of mental health needs and provides a broad range of services for those who need assistance. To locate VA mental health services, go to www.mentalhealth.va.gov/index.asp.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES

The Department of Health Care Services' veterans enhancement project helps veterans, who are receiving Medi-Cal services; obtain the veteran benefits they are entitled to. Veterans receiving Medi-Cal services, may also qualify for federal benefits for themselves and their families. For more information, go to www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medi-cal/Pages/Veterans.aspx.

CALIFORNIA COUNTY ADULT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

California's public mental health system offers services ranging from traditional mental health treatment, including crisis intervention, medications, and a variety of rehabilitation services, to specifically address the recovery needs of adults with serious and persistent mental illnesses and children with serious emotional disturbances. Each county has an access telephone number, which can be called any time, day or night, for information on local mental health services. For more information on California County Adult Mental Health Services, go to www.dmh.ca.gov/Services_and_Programs/VeteransResources/docs/CountyAccessReferralServices.pdf.

NETWORK OF CARE FOR VETERANS

The Network of Care web site provides a comprehensive listing of mental health and other resources for service members, veterans and their families. Visit Network of Care at www.networkofcare.org and click on 'Service Members, Veterans & Their Families in California.' Choose the county of residence, and click on 'Service Directory' to find the services needed.

NOT-FOR-PROFIT MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR VETERANS, SERVICE MEMBERS, AND FAMILIES

COURAGE TO CALL

Courage to Call is dedicated to helping current and former service members, including those who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. This dedication extends to military families and loved ones. All Courage to Call staff have been in the military or have been military family members. They have firsthand knowledge of the rigors of the military and military family life, constant deployments and transitioning out of the military. They are dedicated to helping veterans and their loved ones get the services and assistance they need and deserve. They can help veterans find supportive information, access and referrals throughout the San Diego County. For more information, go to visit www.211sandiego.org/courage-to-call.

GIVE AN HOUR

Give an Hour is a nationwide nonprofit organization that connects U.S. military personnel and loved ones affected by the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan with a range of free mental health services in their communities. Go to www.giveanhour.org to find an area provider.

NATIONAL VETERAN FOUNDATION

The National Veteran Foundation (NVF) is staffed by a team of veterans (from Vietnam, the Cold War, Iraq, and Afghanistan) who are specially trained in the delivery of crisis information and referral services, as well as a team of licensed volunteer counselors to whom all crisis calls are routed, more than 350,000 veterans in need of medical treatment, substance abuse or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) counseling, VA benefits advocacy, food, shelter, employment training, legal aid, or suicide intervention, have now been served by this one-of-a-kind resource. Also, as a recognized leader within the community of organizations that specialize in providing human service programs to veterans and their families, NVF frequently plays a key role as advisor, partner, and collaborator. For more information, go to www.nvf.org.

SOLDIER'S PROJECT

The Soldier's Project is a statewide network of licensed mental health professionals who offer free psychological treatment to military service members (active duty, National Guard, Reserves and veterans) who have served or who expect to serve in the conflicts in Iraq or Afghanistan. To find a therapist area therapist, go to www.thesoldiersproject.org or call (818) 761-7498 or (877) 576-5343 toll free.

WORDS TO PLOWSHARES

Swords to Plowshares is a community-based, not-for-profit veteran service organization that provides wrap-around care to more than 2,000 veterans in the San Francisco Bay Area each year. The organization is committed to helping veterans break through the cultural, educational, psychological and economic barriers they often face in their transition to the civilian world. For more information, go to www.swords-to-plowshares.org.

VET TO VET

Vet to Vet is dedicated to helping veterans and others who have psychiatric conditions establish meaningful lives in the community. The group works to improve and increase mental health services through community education and service and is based on the concept of mutual help. Vet to Vet is made up of people with mental illness or psychiatric conditions who happen to be veterans. The organization provides training on how to establish ongoing peer support, and materials are free. For more information, go to vet2vetusa.org/Home/tabid/37/Default.aspx.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Historically, active duty service members had lower rates of suicide than the general population; however, since 2005 the rates have increased dramatically, particularly among Soldiers and Marines. From 2005 to 2009, more than 1,100 members of the Armed Forces took their own lives: an average of one suicide every 36 hours. Suicide is a major public health issue in the United States, but it is important to recognize that suicide is a preventable tragedy. With help comes hope.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE WHEN TO ASK FOR HELP

Sometimes, problems seem like they are impossible to solve for many different reasons. Sometimes we are not even fully aware a problem is building up, we just know something is wrong. When problems begin to build up, even the strongest individuals may think about suicide. Yet suicide is not the answer. It is a permanent solution to a temporary problem.

Learn the signs of suicide risk, and seek help immediately if any of the following warning signs are recognized:

- » Threatening to hurt or kill oneself
- » Looking for ways to kill oneself
- » Trying to get pills, guns, or other means to harm oneself
- » Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide
- » Feeling hopeless
- » Experiencing rage, uncontrolled anger or seeking revenge
- » Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities
- » Feeling trapped, like there is no way out
- » Abusing drugs or alcohol
- » Withdrawing from friends or family

- » Having dramatic changes in mood
- » Feeling like there is no reason for living, no sense of purpose in life
- » Sleeping too much or too little
- » Giving away possessions

VETERAN-SPECIFIC RISKS

- » Frequent deployments
- » Deployments to hostile environments
- » Exposure to extreme stress
- » Physical/sexual assault while in the service (not limited to women)
- » Length of deployments
- » Service-related injury

WHAT FACTORS HELP PROTECT PEOPLE FROM SUICIDE?

- » Family, friends, social support, close relationships, battle buddy
- » Coping/problem solving skills
- » Ongoing health and mental health care relationships
- » Reasons for living
- » Cultural and religious beliefs that discourage suicide and
- » Support living

MYTHS AND REALITIES ABOUT SUICIDE

- » **Myth:** Asking about suicide will plant the idea in a person's head.
- » **Reality:** Asking about suicide does not create suicidal thoughts any more than asking about chest pain causes a heart attack. The act of asking the question simply gives the veteran permission to talk about his or her thoughts or feelings.
- » **Myth:** There are talkers and there are doers.
- » **Reality:** Most people who die by suicide have communicated some intent, wish, or desire to kill themselves. Willingness to talk about suicide offers an opportunity to intervene before suicidal behaviors occur.
- » **Myth:** If somebody really wants to die by suicide, there is nothing that can be done about it.
- » **Reality:** Most suicidal ideas are associated with underlying conditions that are highly treatable, such as depression, anxiety, or health problems. Providing treatment for these underlying conditions can save a life.

The acute risk for suicide is often time limited. It is vital to be able to help someone find a safe environment to survive the immediate crisis.

- » **Myth:** He/she really wouldn't commit suicide because...
 - » just made plans for a vacation
 - » has young children at home
 - » made a verbal or written promise
 - » knows how dearly their family loves them
- » **Reality:** Suicidal thinking can overwhelm even the most rational person. Anyone experiencing significant suicidal thoughts must be taken seriously and referred to a health care provider who can evaluate their condition and provide treatment as appropriate.

WHERE TO GET HELP

The VA has a national suicide prevention program that identifies, screens, assesses, refers, tracks, and treats veterans at risk. In addition, many states and communities have local resources that offer help.

VETERANS SUICIDE PREVENTION HOTLINE

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a free, 24-hour hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. Veterans can call the Lifeline number, (800) 273-TALK (8255), and press "1" to be routed to the Veterans Suicide Prevention hotline. If an individual prefers not to talk to a VA counselor, the Lifeline number will route the caller to one of the nine crisis centers in California that are accredited to operate a suicide prevention hotline. Individuals may also visit the website www.veteranscrisisline.net and chat confidentially online with a representative or send a text to 838255 to receive confidential support.

VETERANS CHAT

Veterans Chat allows veterans, their families, and friends to anonymously chat with a trained VA counselor. If during the online chat it is determined that the person is in crisis, the counselor can take immediate steps to transfer the person to the VA Suicide Prevention Hotline, where further crisis intervention, counseling and referral services are provided. To access online chat services, go to www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

VA SUICIDE PREVENTION COORDINATORS

Each VA Medical Center has a Suicide Prevention Coordinator to make sure veterans receive needed counseling and services. To locate a Suicide Prevention Coordinator, go to www.veteranscrisisline.net.

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is an anxiety disorder caused by experiencing traumatic events such as combat, disasters, terrorism, serious accidents, or physical or sexual assault. PTSD includes three types of symptoms:

1. Re-experiencing or reliving the trauma, such as having flashbacks, nightmares, or becoming very upset when reminded of the trauma.
2. Avoiding or staying away from places or people because they bring back the trauma, isolating from others, and/or feeling numb.
3. Experiencing increased arousal such as being on guard, being irritable, having trouble sleeping, or startling easily.

After a trauma, it is normal to have painful memories and to become upset when reminded of what happened. For most, these reactions lessen over time and thinking returns to normal. For some, however, reactions continue and are severe; they disrupt living, and beliefs remain negative and intense. How people respond to these early, normal reactions, in part, can determine if PTSD develops. For example, because memories and reminders of the trauma are painful, it makes sense to want to avoid them. However, too much avoidance can prevent a person from adequately dealing with the memories and reminders and making sense of what happened. This may lead normal trauma reactions to become more lasting PTSD symptoms.

Although most people recover after a trauma, it is not uncommon for people to develop PTSD. About 7% of the general US population will have PTSD in their lifetime, with women being more than twice as likely to develop it as men. Following a trauma, it can be expected that around 20% of women and 8% of men will develop PTSD. Certain types of trauma, such as sexual assault and combat, can cause even higher rates.

PTSD symptoms usually appear very soon after experiencing a trauma. Other problems also commonly accompany PTSD. These include depression, other anxiety disorders, and alcohol and substance abuse. In fact, more than half of

men with PTSD have alcohol problems and nearly half of women with PTSD have depression. PTSD can also reduce one's ability to function in relationships, at work and school, and in leisure activities. In addition, people with PTSD may suffer physical symptoms and may be at increased risk of medical problems.

Developing PTSD is not a sign of weakness; anyone can develop PTSD, but it can be treated with talk therapy or medication, or a combination of both. The VA provides nearly 200 specialized PTSD treatment programs and each VA Medical Center has PTSD specialists who can assist in providing treatment for veterans.

A referral is usually needed to access the specialty programs. To locate a program in the area, go to www2.va.gov/directory/guide/ptsd_flsh.asp. Not all VA facilities offer the same programs. A veteran's doctor may help to decide which program is most appropriate.

Individuals in crisis should call 911, go to your nearest emergency room, or call the Veterans Crisis Line at (800) 273-8255 (veterans and service members, press 1) or call the 24/7 Veteran Combat Call Center at (800) 927-8387 to talk to another combat veteran. For more information about available mental health services, see the Mental Health Services section (pg. 78).

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is a severe or moderate trauma to the head, where physical portions of the brain are damaged and functioning is impaired. The trauma can range from mild cases which cause limited functional impairments, such as a concussion or headaches. However, on many occasions, the trauma can be much more severe and cause balance problems, mood changes and memory loss.

TBI and PTSD have been called the signature wound of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan due to the frequent and powerful blasts experienced in the field; an injury not commonly seen before.

Long and short-term effects of a TBI include:

- » Memory loss
- » Difficulty understanding others
- » Loss of self-control
- » Physical aggression

- » Flash anger
- » Difficulty expressing thoughts
- » Apathy
- » Poor judgment and reasoning
- » Seizures
- » Inappropriate sexual behavior
- » Physical disabilities
- » Impaired social skills
- » Inability to recognize or accept limitations

Veterans who believe they may have suffered a TBI during their time in the military should go to www.dvbic.org/audience/service-members-veterans for more information.

Veterans who sustained any injuries during a deployment or at home that resulted in an alteration of consciousness may have sustained a mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI) or concussion and should be evaluated. Please note that the mTBI screen alone does not provide diagnosis of mTBI; a clinical interview is required. The VA offers TBI screening to all veterans and active duty service members who have served in combat.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY SERVICES OF CALIFORNIA

Traumatic Brain Injury Services of California (TBISCA) is a group of seven sites located throughout California, whose mission is to ensure that adults with traumatic brain injury have the necessary services to enhance self-sufficiency.

They focus on:

1. Information, referral and coordination
2. Community reintegration
3. Supported living
4. Vocational supportive services

To find a listing for all TBISCA sites in California, go to www.tbisca.org/california-service-providers.asp.

MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA (MST)

Military Sexual Trauma (MST) is the term used to refer to sexual assault or sexual harassment that occurred while the veteran was in the military. Some veterans, both men and women, suffered personal or physical assault while on active duty and they may still struggle with fear, anxiety, embarrassment, or profound anger as a result of these experiences. Examples of this can be but are not limited to rape, physical assault, domestic battering, and stalking.

Some difficulties that can be experienced by survivors of MST include:

1. Disturbing memories or nightmares;
2. Feelings of numbness;
3. Trouble sleeping;
4. Depression, anger and irritability;
5. Relationship difficulties;
6. Problems with drugs and alcohol;
7. Physical health problems.

The VA provides free, confidential counseling and treatment for mental and physical health conditions related to experiences of MST. Veterans do not need to have a service-connected disability to receive treatment. This benefit is available even if the veteran is not eligible for other VA care. Incidents need not have been reported or documented when they occurred.

Every VA medical facility has a designated MST Coordinator who serves as a contact person for MST-related issues. This person is the veteran's advocate and can help the veteran find and access VA services and programs, state and federal benefits, and community resources. To locate the local MST Coordinator, see the "Healthcare" section of this book (pg. 90).

Every VA facility has providers knowledgeable about treatment for the after effects of MST. Many have specialized outpatient mental health services focusing on sexual trauma. To accommodate veterans who do not feel comfortable in mixed-gender treatment settings, some VA facilities have separate programs for men and women. All residential and inpatient MST programs have separate sleeping areas for men and women. For more information or support, contact the local VA medical facility (pg. 90).

Additionally, Vet Centers have specially trained sexual trauma counselors and all conversations and records are kept confidential and are not accessible by the VA. The Soldier's Project and Give an Hour also offer resources for veterans who wish not to be seen by the VA. For more information on Vet Centers, see (pg. 90). For more information on the Soldier's Project and Give an Hour, see (pg. 80).

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

Treatment and recovery services are available throughout California for veterans who have a problem with alcohol, drugs, or misuse of prescription drugs. Services range from emergency counseling and initial assessment to detoxification services and residential or long-term outpatient treatment.

Confidential programs and services are available to veterans who find alcohol, illicit drugs or prescription drugs are impacting their relationships or their ability to maintain employment, housing or family relationships. In addition to services provided by the VA healthcare system, county and community-based resources may be available.

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG PROGRAMS

The California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs (ADP) and the counties throughout California work together to support our servicemen and women and their families by leading efforts to ensure substance use and co-occurring behavioral health services are accessible and confidential with successful outcomes. The ADP website has a dedicated veterans page that provides veteran-specific service links, a Network of Care link, and training and self-help options at www.adp.ca.gov/veteran/index.shtml.

Alcohol and drug treatment programs are available in all 58 counties. Each county has an alcohol and drug program office that can help veterans find the right alcohol and other drug-related services available in their area. To locate the local county office, go to www.adp.ca.gov/help/tw_index.shtml.

ADP is also responsible for administering prevention, treatment, and recovery services for alcohol and drug abuse and problem gambling. ADP services are available throughout California to those who have a problem with alcohol, drugs or gambling or know someone who does.

ADPs CARE (California Access to Recovery Effort) program, funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), is specifically for service members up to the age of 25, including veterans, who are seeking treatment and recovery support services. The CARE program has providers in Butte, Los Angeles, Sacramento, Shasta, and Tehama counties. For more information about the CARE program go to www.californiacares4youth.com. For more information about substance use disorders and available treatment programs go to www.adp.ca.gov.

CONFIDENTIAL ON-LINE SELF-ASSESSMENT SCREENING TOOLS

Veterans concerned about whether drugs or alcohol are harming their health and putting them at risk for other problems, can assess their consumption patterns using a free, confidential online tool. By answering a few short questions about past and present use of various drugs, such as marijuana, cocaine, tobacco, inhalants or alcohol users can get confidential feedback about the likely risks of drug and alcohol use and advice about when and where to seek more information, evaluation, and help. The assessment only takes a few minutes to complete and gives personalized confidential results based on age, gender, and use patterns so the user can take positive action. For free, confidential on-line alcohol screening, go to www.alcoholscreening.org/home.aspx. For free, confidential on-line drug screening, go to www.drugscreening.org.

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG PROGRAMS RESOURCE CENTER

The ADP Resource Center maintains a comprehensive collection of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention and treatment information. This information is provided to all California residents at no cost. The Resource Center provides non-emergency information only and does not operate a crisis line. The Resource Center maintains a toll-free statewide telephone number for those needing alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention and treatment information, publications or lending services.

California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs

1700 K Street, 1st Floor

Sacramento, CA 95811-4037

(800) 879-2772 (*Non emergency line. 8:00a.m. - 5:00p.m., Mon-Fri*)

(916) 323-1270 (F)

resourcecenter@adp.ca.gov

DIRECTORY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL FACILITIES

VA SIERRA NEVADA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM (888) 838-6256

MEDICAL CENTER

Sierra Nevada Medical Center
975 Kirman Avenue
Reno, NV 89502
(775) 786-7200

OUTPATIENT CLINIC

Sierra Foothills Outpatient Clinic
11985 Heritage Oaks Place
Auburn, CA 95603
(530) 889-0872

VA Carson Valley Outpatient Clinic
925 Ironwood Drive, Suite 2102
Minden, NV 89423
(775) 782-5265

VA Diamond View
Outpatient Clinic
110 Bella Way
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-4550 or (877) 816-8572

VA Lahontan Valley Outpatient Clinic
345 West A Street
Fallon, NV 89406
(775) 428-6161
(775) 428-6171 (F)

MST COORDINATOR

Nicole Guyette
(775) 326-5720, ext. 5848

VA NORTHERN CALIFORNIA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM (800) 382-8387

MEDICAL CENTER

Sacramento VA Medical Center
10535 Hospital Way
Mather, CA 95655
(916) 843-7000

OUTPATIENT CLINIC

McClellan Outpatient Clinic
5342 Dudley Boulevard
Sacramento, CA 95652
(916) 561-7400 or (800) 382-8387

Redding Outpatient Clinic
351 Hartnell Avenue
Redding, CA 96002
(530) 226-7555

Chico Outpatient Clinic
280 Cohasset Road
Chico, CA 95926
(530) 879-5000

Martinez Outpatient Clinic
150 Muir Road
Martinez, CA 94553
(925) 372-2000

Oakland Outpatient Clinic
2221 Martin Luther King Jr. Way
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 267-7800

Fairfield Outpatient Clinic
103 Bodin Circle, Travis AFB
Fairfield, CA 94535
(707) 437-1800

Mare Island Outpatient Clinic
201 Walnut Avenue
Vallejo, CA 94592
(707) 562-8200

Yreka Rural Outpatient Clinic
101 E. Oberlin Drive
Yreka, CA 96097
(530) 841-8500
(530) 842-9640 (F)

Yuba City Outpatient Clinic
425 Plumas Street
Yuba City, CA 95991
(530) 751-4500
(530) 673-3735 (F)

Vet Clinics
Oakland Behavioral Health Clinic
525 21st Street
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 587-3400

McClellan Dental Clinic
5401 Arnold Avenue
McClellan, CA 95652
(916) 561-7800

Sacramento Mental Health
Clinic at Mather
10535 Hospital Way, Building 649
Sacramento, CA 95655
(916) 366-5420

VET CENTER

Sacramento Vet Center
1111 Howe Avenue, Suite 390
Sacramento, CA 95825
(916) 566-7430
(916) 566-7433 (F)

Citrus Heights Vet Center
5650 Sunrise Boulevard, Suite 150
Citrus Heights, CA 95610
(916) 535-0420
(916) 535-0419 (F)

Chico Vet Center
250 Cohasset Road, Suite 40
Chico, CA 95926
(530) 899-6300
(530) 891-0102 (F)

Oakland Vet Center
2221 Martin Luther King Jr. Way
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 763-3904
(510) 763-5631 (F)

4B Pacific Western Regional Office
420 Executive Court North, Suite A
Fairfield, CA 94534
(707) 646-2988
(707)-646-2960 (F)

Concord Vet Center
1333 Willow Pass Road, Suite 106
Concord, CA 94520
(925) 680-4526

HOMELESS COORDINATOR

VA Northern California
Homeless Coordinator
(916) 843-9090

MST COORDINATOR

Dr. Catherine Novotny
(925)372-2554

**VA CENTRAL CALIFORNIA
HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
(888) 826-2838**

MEDICAL CENTER

Fresno VA Medical Center
2615 E. Clinton Avenue
Fresno, CA 93703
(559) 225-6100

OUTPATIENT CLINIC

VA South Valley
Outpatient Clinic
1050 N. Cherry Street
Tulare, CA 93274
(559) 684-8703

VA Merced

Outpatient Clinic
340 E. Yosemite Avenue
Merced, CA 95340
(209) 381-0105

VET CENTER

Fresno Vet Center
1320 E. Shaw Avenue, Suite 125
Fresno, CA 93710
(559) 487-5660
(559) 487-5399 (F)

Fresno Mobile Vet Center
3515 West Dakota Avenue
Fresno, CA 93722
(559) 487-5660

HOMELESS COORDINATOR

VA Fresno Homeless Coordinator
(559) 225-6100, ext. 5674

MST COORDINATOR

Darcy Evans
(559) 225-6100, ext. 4409

**VA PALO ALTO
HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
(800) 455-0057**

MEDICAL CENTER

VA Medical Center Palo Alto
3801 Miranda Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94304
(650) 493-5000

Livermore Division

4951 Arroyo Road
Livermore, CA 94550
(925) 373-4700

Menlo Park Division
795 Willow Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025
(650) 614-9997

OUTPATIENT CLINIC

Capitola Outpatient Clinic
1350 N. 41st Street, Suite 102
Capitola, CA 95010-3906
(831) 464-5519

Fremont Clinic
39199 Liberty Street
Fremont, CA 94538
(510) 791-4000
(510)-791-4036 (F)

Modesto Clinic
1225 Oakdale Road
Modesto, CA 95355
(209) 557-6200

Monterey Clinic
3401 Engineer Lane
Seaside, CA 93955
(831) 883-3800

San Jose Clinic
80 Great Oaks Boulevard
San Jose, CA 95119
(408) 363-3000

Sonora Clinic
13663 Mono Way
Sonora, CA 95370
(209) 588-2600
(209) 946-9458 (F)

Stockton Clinic
7777 South Freedom Drive
French Camp, CA 95231
(209) 946-3400
(209) 946-9458 (F)

VET CENTER

Santa Cruz County Vet Center
1350 41st Avenue, Suite 102
Capitola, CA 95010
(831) 464-4575
(831) 464-6597 (F)

Modesto Vet Center
1219 N. Carpenter Road, Suite 12
Modesto, CA 95351
(209) 569-0713
(209) 569-0718 (F)

Peninsula Vet Center
2946 Broadway Street
Redwood City, CA 94062
(650) 299-0672
(650)-299-0677 (F)

San Jose Vet Center
278 North 2nd Street
San Jose, CA 95112
(408) 993-0729
(408) 993-0829 (F)

HOMELESS COORDINATOR

VA Menlo Park Division
(650) 493-5000, ext. 22751
(800) 455-0057

MST COORDINATOR

Ann Lefevre
(650) 493-5000, ext. 2-25000

**SAN FRANCISCO
VA MEDICAL CENTER
(877) 487-2838****MEDICAL CENTER**

San Francisco VA Medical Center
4150 Clement Street
San Francisco, CA 94121
(415) 221-4810

OUTPATIENT CLINIC

Clearlake VA Outpatient Clinic
15145 Lakeshore Drive
Clearlake, CA 95422
(707) 995-7200

SFVAMC Downtown Clinic
401 3rd Street
San Francisco, CA 94107
(415) 281-5100

Eureka Veterans Clinic
930 W. Harris Street
Eureka, CA 95503
(707) 269-7500

VA San Bruno Outpatient Clinic
1001 Sneath Lane, Suite 300, 3rd Floor
San Bruno, CA 94066
(650) 615-6000

Santa Rosa Clinic
3841 Brickway Boulevard
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
(707) 569-2300

Ukiah VA Community Based
Outpatient Clinic
630 Kings Court
Ukiah, CA 95482
(707) 468-7700

VET CENTER

San Francisco Vet Center
505 Polk Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 441-5051
(415) 441-5051 (F)

Eureka Vet Center
2830 G Street, Suite A
Eureka, CA 95501
(707) 444-8271
(707) 444-8391 (F)

North Bay Vet Center
6225 State Farm Drive, Suite J
Rohnert Park, CA 94928
(707) 586-3295
(707) 586-9055 (F)

HOMELESS COORDINATOR

VA San Francisco
Homeless Coordinator
Health Care-Homeless Vets
(415) 281-5100
(800) 733-0502

MST COORDINATOR

Nancy Herzoff
(415) 221-4810, ext. 3907

**VA GREATER LOS ANGELES
HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
(800) 952-4852****MEDICAL CENTER**

West Los Angeles Medical Center
11301 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90073
(310) 478-3711

Sepulveda Ambulatory Care Center
16111 Plummer Street
Los Angeles, CA 91343
(818) 891-7711

Los Angeles Ambulatory Care Center
351 E. Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 253-2677

OUTPATIENT CLINIC

Bakersfield Community Based
Outpatient Clinic
1801 Westwind Drive
Bakersfield, CA 93301
(661) 632-1800
(661) 632-1888 (F)

East Los Angeles Outpatient Clinic
5426 East Olympic Boulevard,
Suite 150
Commerce, CA 90040
(323) 725-7372

Gardena Outpatient Clinic
1251 Redondo Beach Boulevard,
3rd Floor
Gardena, CA 90247
(310) 851-4705

Lancaster Community Based
Outpatient Clinic
547 West Lancaster Boulevard
Lancaster, CA 93534
(661) 729-8655

Oxnard Outpatient Clinic
2000 Outlet Center Drive, Suite 225
Oxnard, CA 93033
(805) 604-6960

Pasadena
420 W. Las Tunas Drive
San Gabriel, CA 91776
(713) 473-6300

San Luis Obispo
Pacific Medical Plaza
1288 Morro Street, Suite 200
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
(805) 543-1233
(805) 547-1179 (F)

Santa Barbara Community Based
Outpatient Clinic
4440 Calle Real
Santa Barbara, CA 93110
(805) 683-1491

Santa Maria Community Based
Outpatient Clinic
1550 East Main Street.
Santa Maria, CA 93454
(805) 354-6000

Sepulveda Outpatient Clinic and
Nursing Home
16111 Plummer Street
North Hills, CA 91343
(818) 891-7711

Ventura Community Based
Outpatient Clinic
120 N. Ashwood Avenue
Ventura, CA 93003
(805) 658-5800

VET CENTER

Antelope Valley Vet Center
38925 Trade Center Drive, Suite J
Palmdale, CA 93551
(661) 267-1026

East Los Angeles Vet Center
5400 E. Olympic Boulevard, Suite 140
Commerce, CA 90022
(323) 728-9966
(323) 887-1082 (F)

West Los Angeles Vet Center
5730 Uplander Way, Suite 100
Culver City, CA 90230
(310) 641-0326
(310) 641-2653 (F)

Los Angeles Veterans
Resource Center
1045 W. Redondo Beach Boulevard,
Suite 150
Gardena, CA 90247
(310) 767-1221
(310) 767-1403 (F)

Sepulveda Vet Center
9737 Haskell Avenue
Sepulveda, CA 91343
(818) 892-9227

Ventura Vet Center
790 E. Santa Clara Street, Suite 100
Ventura, CA 93001
(805) 585-1860
(805) 585-1864 (F)

HOMELESS COORDINATOR

VA Los Angeles
Homeless Coordinator
(213) 253-2677, ext. 4766

MST COORDINATOR

Dr. Carole Goguen
(213) 253-2677, ext. 4716

**VA LOMA LINDA
HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
(800) 741-8387**

MEDICAL CENTER

Loma Linda Medical Center
11201 Benton Street
Loma Linda, CA 92357
(909) 825-7084

OUTPATIENT CLINIC

Blythe Rural Health Clinic
1273 Hobson Way
Blythe, CA 92225
(760) 921-1224

Corona Health Clinic
800 Magnolia Avenue, Suite 101
Corona, CA 92879
(951) 817-8820

Murrieta VA Clinic
28078 Baxter Road, Suite 540
Murrieta, CA 92563
(951) 290-6500

Palm Desert Clinic
41-990 Cook Street, Building F,
Suite 1004
Palm Desert, CA 92211
(760) 341-5570

Rancho Cucamonga Clinic
8599 Haven Avenue, Suite 102
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730
(909) 946-5348

Redland Blvd Outpatient Clinic
25828 Redlands Boulevard
Redlands, CA 92374
(909) 825-7084 ext. 6930

Victorville Clinic
12138 Industrial Boulevard, Suite 120
Victorville, CA 92395
(760) 951-2599

VET CENTER

Corona Vet Center
800 Magnolia Avenue, Suite 110
Corona, CA 92879
(951) 734-0525
(951) 734-0063 (F)

High Desert Vet Center
15095 Amargosa Road, Suite 107
Victorville, CA 92394
(760) 261-5925
(760) 241-7828 (F)

San Bernardino Vet Center
1325 E. Cooley Drive, Suite 101
Colton, CA 92324
(909) 801-5762
(909) 801-5767 (F)

Temecula Vet Center
40935 County Center Drive, Suite A
Temecula, CA 92591
(951) 302-4849
(951) 296-0598 (F)

HOMELESS COORDINATOR

VA Loma Linda Homeless Coordinator
(909) 825-7084, ext. 2388

MST COORDINATOR

Angie Tremmel
(909) 825-7084, ext. 2595

**VA LONG BEACH
HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
(888) 769-8387**

MEDICAL CENTER

Long Beach Medical Center
5901 East 7th Street
Long Beach, CA 90822
(562) 826-8000

OUTPATIENT CLINIC

Anaheim
2569 W. Woodland Drive
Anaheim, CA 92801
(714) 780-5400

Santa Ana Outpatient Clinic
1506 Brookhollow Drive
Santa Ana, CA 92704
(714) 434-4600

Villages at Cabrillo Health Clinic
2001 River Avenue, Building 28
Long Beach, CA 90806
(562) 826-8000, ext. 8414

Laguna Hills Health Clinic
25292 McIntyre Street
Laguna Hills, CA 92653
(949) 269-0700

Whittier/Santa Fe Springs Clinic
10210 Orr and Day Road

Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670
(562) 466-6080

VET CENTER

North Orange County Vet Center
12453 Lewis Street, Suite 101
Garden Grove, CA 92840
(714) 776-0161

HOMELESS COORDINATOR

VA Long Beach Homeless Coordinator
(562) 826 8000, ext. 5753

**VA SAN DIEGO
HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
(800) 331-8387**

MEDICAL CENTER

VA San Diego Medical Center
3350 La Jolla Village Drive
San Diego, CA 92161
(858) 552-8585

OUTPATIENT CLINIC

Chula Vista (South Bay)
835 3rd Avenue
Chula Vista, CA 91910
(619) 409-1600

Escondido
815 E. Pennsylvania Avenue
Escondido, CA 92025
(760) 466-7020

Imperial Valley
1600 South Imperial Avenue
El Centro, CA 92243
(760) 352-1506

Mission Valley
8810 Rio San Diego Drive
San Diego, CA 92108
(619) 400-5000

Oceanside
1300 Rancho del Oro Road
Oceanside, CA 92056
(760) 643-2000

VET CENTER

San Diego Vet Center
2790 Truxton Road, Suite 130
San Diego, CA 92106
(858) 642-1500
(619)294-2535 (F)

San Marcos Vet Center
One Civic Center Drive, Suite 140
San Marcos, CA 92069
(760) 744-6914
(760) 744-6919 (F)

Chula Vista Vet Center
180 Otay Lakes Road, Suite 108
Chula Vista, CA 91902
(877) 618-6534
(619) 479-8539 (F)

South Orange County Vet Center
26431 Crown Valley Parkway,
Suite 100
Mission Viejo, CA 92691
(949) 348-6700
(949) 348-6719 (F)

HOMELESS COORDINATOR
VA San Diego Homeless Clinic
(619) 400-5157

MST COORDINATOR

Carolyn Allard
(619) 400-5189

VA NETWORK HOMELESS COORDINATORS

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Roberta L. Rosenthal
VISN 21 Network Homeless
Coordinator
901 Market Street, Suite 380
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 489-3311
roberta.rosenthal@va.gov

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Jennifer Gerrib
VISN 22 Network Homeless
Coordinator
300 Oceangate, Suite 700
Long Beach, CA 90802
(562) 826-5219
jennifer.gerrib@va.gov

CHAPTER 4: **EDUCATION**



CALIFORNIA VETERANS EDUCATION BENEFITS

CALIFORNIA STATE APPROVING AGENCY FOR VETERANS EDUCATION (TITLE 38)

Under authority of federal law, Title 38 United States Code, the California State Approving Agency for Veterans Education (CSAAVE) approves or disapproves veterans' education and training programs, prevents abuses, and promotes quality in veterans' education by evaluating and monitoring education and training programs. The CSAAVE serves as part of the State of California and operates under contract with the VA.

CSAAVE conducts on-site supervisory visits to approved institutions and schools seeking approval, provides technical assistance to all interested parties, and is engaged in outreach activities to encourage eligible individuals to use the benefits provided by the Montgomery GI Bill. The programs that can be approved by the CSAAVE are institutions of higher learning (colleges and universities), non-degree institutions (vocational and technical schools), apprenticeships, public and private employer's on-the-job training (OJT), and licensing and certification exams. For more information or to submit a complaint about a CSAAVE-approved institution, go to www.calvet.ca.gov (Vet Services).

COLLEGE TUITION FEE WAIVER FOR VETERAN DEPENDENTS

The College Tuition Fee Waiver for Veteran Dependents benefit waives mandatory system-wide tuition and fees at any State of California Community College, California State University, or University of California campus. This program does not cover the expense of books, parking or room and board. There are four plans under which dependents of veterans may be eligible.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Plan A

- » The child of a veteran who is totally disabled due to service-connected disabilities or whose death was officially rated as service-connected is eligible. The child must be over 14 years old and under 27 years old to be eligible. If the child is a veteran, then the age limit is extended to age 30;
- » The spouse or Registered Domestic Partner (RDP) of a wartime veteran who has been rated as service-connected totally disabled is eligible. There are no age limit restrictions;

- » The unmarried surviving spouse or RDP of a wartime veteran whose death has been rated as service-connected is eligible. There are no age limit restrictions;
- » Any dependent of any veteran who has been declared missing in action, captured in the line of duty by hostile forces, or forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power is eligible.

The veteran must have served at least one day of active duty during a period of war as declared by the U.S. Congress, or during any time in which the veteran was awarded a campaign or expeditionary medal. Concurrent receipt of benefits under Plan A and VA Chapter 35 benefits is prohibited. To receive benefits under Plan A, a dependent must sign an “election” statement acknowledging this fact. There are no income restrictions under this plan. To be eligible, the event which caused basic entitlement to benefits (i.e., the date the veteran died of service-connected causes or the date the VA rated the veteran as totally disabled as a result of service-connected disabilities) must have occurred prior to the child’s 21st birthday.

To view the definition of “wartime veteran,” go to (pg. 59).

Plan B

The child of a veteran who has a service-connected disability, or had a service-connected disability at the time of death, or died of service-related causes is eligible. The child’s annual income, which includes the child’s adjusted gross income, plus the value of support provided by a parent, may not exceed the annual income limit. The current academic year entitlement is based upon the previous calendar year’s annual income. To view this year’s income limit, go to www.calvet.ca.gov (Education).

Under Plan B, wartime service is not required and there are no specific age requirements. Children are the only dependents eligible under this plan. There is no prohibition against receiving concurrent VA Chapter 35 benefits.

Plan C

Any dependent of any member of the California National Guard, who in the line of duty while on active service to the state, was killed, died of a disability resulting from an event that occurred while in active service to the state, or is permanently disabled as a result of an event that occurred while in the service to the state is eligible. Surviving spouses or RDPs who have not remarried are also eligible.

“Active service to the state,” for the purpose of this benefit, means a member of the California National Guard activated pursuant to Section 146 of the Military and Veterans Code. A copy of those orders pursuant to Section 146, not Section 143, must be furnished to establish eligibility.

Plan D

Medal of Honor recipients and children of Medal of Honor recipients under the age of 27 may qualify. Benefits under Plan D are limited to undergraduate studies only, and applicants are subject to both income and age restrictions. There is no prohibition against receiving concurrent VA Chapter 35 benefits.

Note: All applicants must meet California residency requirements.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply, contact the local County Veterans Service Office (pg. 163) or the Admissions Office of any California college system campus. For more information about the college fee tuition waiver and to download an application, go to www.cacvso.org.

NON-RESIDENT COLLEGE FEE WAIVER

The Non-Resident College Fee Waiver waives non-resident fees at all State of California Community Colleges, California State University, or University of California campuses.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

- » A student who is a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces stationed in this state on active duty for more than one year immediately prior to being discharged is entitled to resident classification. This classification is valid for the length of time the veteran lives in this state after being discharged up to the minimum time necessary to become a resident.

- » An undergraduate student who is a member of the U.S. Armed Forces stationed in this state on active duty is eligible, except a member of the armed forces assigned for educational purposes to a state-supported institution of higher education.
- » An undergraduate student who is a natural or adopted child, stepchild, or spouse who is a dependent of a member of the armed forces stationed in this state on active duty is eligible.
- » A student seeking a graduate degree who is a member of the U.S. Armed Forces stationed in this state on active duty except a member of the armed forces assigned for educational purposes to a state-supported institution of higher education, is eligible. There is a two-year limit for graduate-level studies.
- » A student seeking a graduate degree who is a natural or adopted child, stepchild, or spouse who is a dependent of a member of the U.S. Armed Forces stationed in this state on active duty is eligible. There is a one-year limit for graduate level studies.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply, contact the Admissions Office of any State of California Community College, California State University, or University of California campus or the local County Veterans Service Office (pg. 163).

TROOPS TO COLLEGE

Troops to College was created to attract more veterans to California public universities and colleges by making campuses more veteran friendly. The initiative was designed to showcase the full range of curriculums and services available to veterans at California state universities.

The program is designed to help veterans, especially combat veterans, transition to civilian life and the college environment. Veterans and their families may enroll in a course about combat stress, post-traumatic stress disorders, and other issues affecting veterans returning to civilian life. The course is taught by a VA counselor who is also a combat veteran. The curriculum is specifically designed to increase the student veteran's academic, work, and social success. The class provides participants instruction in interpersonal skills, methods of adapting to civilian life and work careers, and techniques for managing military operational stress. For more information, go to www.calstate.edu/veterans.

CALIFORNIA NATIONAL GUARD EDUCATION ASSISTANCE AWARD PROGRAM (CNGEAAP)

The California National Guard Education Assistance Award Program (CNG EAAP) issues financial awards to qualifying members of the California National Guard (CNG) and State Military Reserve (SMR). This financial education benefit can pay for up to 100% of fees at the Universities of California, California State Universities, and California Community Colleges. It can also be used for eligible California proprietary and public institutions. With combined military training and a civilian education in areas such as engineering, nursing, communications and information technology, California's National Guard members will be able to serve on two fronts.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO QUALIFY FOR AN AWARD?

- » An active member of, and has served two (2) years in, the CNG or the SMR;
- » Agree to remain an active member in the CNG or the SMR throughout the participation period in the CNG EAAP;
- » Agree to use the award to obtain a certificate, degree, or diploma that is currently not held;
- » Have been accepted to, registered at, or enrolled in a qualifying institution as defined by section 69432.7(l) of the California Education Code;
- » Maintain enrollment in at least three (3) academic units per term;
- » Agree to maintain at least a 2.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA) annually;
- » California resident as determined by the institution (based on resident and non-resident tuition); and
- » Not receiving a Cal Grant award check for the same academic year.

HOW TO APPLY

- » Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) found at www.fafsa.ed.gov.
- » Complete the CNGEAAP application found at <https://nationalguard.csac.ca.gov/Disclaimer.aspx>.
- » Download and print the Statement of Understanding found at www.calguard.ca.gov/education and have it signed by the veteran's Commander.

Note: Discretionary summers will not be covered by the CNGEAAP. Only participants attending mandatory summers will be eligible for an award check.

For additional information, contact Katrina Beck at katrina.beck2@us.army.mil or Katrina.m.beck2nfg@mail.mil or visit the Commission's website at www.csac.ca.gov.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EDUCATION BENEFITS

EDUCATION BENEFITS AND PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS

There are several education programs veterans can use for a wide variety of VA-approved education and training programs, including: apprenticeship and on-the-job training, college degree and certificate programs, flight training, and correspondence courses. Each program provides different benefits to different groups of individuals and offers a specified number of benefits "months".

Typically, most education benefits can be collected for 36 months; however, the maximum that can be collected under any combination of VA education program is 48 months. Please note that veterans can only use one VA education benefit for training at a time. For more detailed information regarding VA education benefits, go to www.gibill.va.gov or call (888) GI BILL1 (442-4551).

Please note that the following list of education programs is not all inclusive and that each individual's situation is different. It is important to pay careful attention when choosing an education program. If a veteran gives up one education benefit in favor of another, it is an irrevocable choice. Veterans are encouraged to check with the school's certifying official to determine which benefit best meets their educational goals.

POST-9/11 GI BILL

The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 also known as Chapter 33, boasts the most comprehensive education benefits package since the original GI Bill was signed into law in 1944 by providing financial support for education and housing to eligible individuals.



WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

A veteran may be eligible if they have at least 90 days of aggregate service on or after September 11, 2001 or were discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days. Veterans must also have received an honorable discharge or have been medically discharged to be eligible.

Based upon the length of aggregate active service, veterans are eligible for a percentage of tuition and housing benefits under Chapter 33 that range from 40% to 100%. The following depicts the percentage of benefit ranges:

- » **100% of benefit** - 36 months of active duty service, or have been discharged for a service-connected disability after 30 days of continuous service
- » **90% of benefit** - 30 total months of active service
- » **80% of benefit** - 24 total months of active service
- » **70% of benefit** - 18 total months of active service
- » **60% of benefit** - 12 total months of active service
- » **50% of benefit** - 6 total months of active service
- » **40% of benefit** - 90 or more days of active service

Note: Qualifying service time excludes service on active duty in entry level and skill training; however, active service performed by National Guardsmen under Title 32 USC for the purpose of organizing, administering, recruiting, instructing, or training the National Guard or under section 502(f) for the purpose of responding to a national emergency now counts towards eligibility.

WHAT BENEFITS DO STUDENTS RECEIVE UNDER THE POST-9/11 GI BILL?

This new education benefit goes well beyond only helping to pay for tuition. Depending on each individual's "rate of pursuit" (full- or part-time study) and situation, veterans may qualify for:

- » **Tuition and Fees:** These payments are issued directly to the school on behalf of the individual at the time the certificate of enrollment is processed.
- » **On Active Duty:** Individuals on active duty may be allotted the total amount of tuition and fees for all public schools. The amount is not limited to the state maximum; however, effective August 1, 2011, private and foreign school costs are capped at \$17,500 annually. Effective October 1, 2011, students on active duty may receive a books-and-supplies stipend.
- » **Not On Active Duty:** The amount allotted is prorated according to length of service. The amount is limited to the highest amount of tuition and fees charged for full-time, undergraduate training at a public institution of higher learning in the state in which the student is enrolled. Effective August 1, 2011, private and foreign school costs are capped at \$17,500 annually. The Yellow Ribbon Program still exists for out-of-state fees and costs above the cap.
- » **Monthly Housing Allowance:** This payment is issued directly to the student at the beginning of each month for education and training pursued the previous month. The amount is prorated based upon rate of pursuit, rounded to the nearest multiple of 10. If a student is training at a rate of pursuit of 75%, he/she would receive 80% of the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rate. In prior years, students enrolled exclusively in online training were not eligible for the housing allowance; however, it is now payable to students (other than those on active duty). The housing allowance payable is equal to 50% of the national average BAH for an E-5 with dependents. In 2013, the payable rate for a full-time student online was \$684.00. Effective August 1, 2011, break or interval pay is no longer payable under any VA education benefit program unless under an Executive Order of the President or due to an emergency, such as a natural disaster or strike. That means that if the semester ends December 15th, the housing allowance is paid for the first 15 days of December only. If the next semester begins January 10th, payment will be made for the remaining days of January.

Note: Students using other VA education programs are included in this change. Monthly benefits will be pro-rated in the same manner.

- » **Books and Supplies Stipend:** This payment is issued directly to the student when the school certifies and VA processes the enrollment. This benefit is prorated based on length of service. The books and supplies stipend can also be paid to students attending school while on active duty.
- » **Yellow Ribbon Payments:** This program allows degree-granting institutions to enter into a voluntary agreement with VA to fund tuition expenses that exceed the highest public in-state undergraduate tuition rate for individuals eligible for the 100% payment tier. The institution can contribute up to 50% of those expenses and VA will match the same amount as the institution. This payment is issued to the school when the school certifies and VA processes the student's enrollment.
- » **College Fund or "Kicker":** These payments are issued directly to the student based on "rate of pursuit" and the education benefits program under which the kicker is payable. These payments are now made on a monthly basis. In the past they were made through a lump sum.
- » **Rural Benefit Payments:** This one-time, lump-sum payment of \$500 is issued directly to a student who resides in a county with six persons or fewer per square mile (as determined by the most recent decennial census), and who either:
 - » physically relocates at least 500 miles to attend an educational institution, or
 - » travels by air (any distance) to physically attend an educational institution, if no other land-based transportation exists.

WHAT KIND OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING DOES THE POST-9/11 GI BILL COVER?

- » Graduate and Undergraduate Degrees: Courses must be offered by a degree-granting institution of higher learning and approved for GI Bill benefits.
- » Tutorial Assistance and Reimbursement: Available for more than one "licensing or certification" test reimbursement; however, entitlement is now charged.
- » National Exams: Reimbursement of fees paid to take national exams used for admission to an institute of higher learning (e.g., SAT, ACT, GMAT, LSAT).

- » Non-College Degree (NCD) Programs: Pays actual net cost for in-state tuition and fees at public NCD institutions. At private and foreign institutions, pays the actual net costs for in-state tuition and fees or \$17,500, whichever is less. Also pays up to \$83 per month for books and supplies.
- » On-The-Job and Apprenticeship Training: Pays a monthly benefit amount prorated based on time in program and up to \$83 per month for books and supplies.
- » Flight Programs: Per academic year, pays the actual net costs for in-state tuition and fees assessed by the school or \$10,000, whichever is less.
- » Correspondence Training: Per academic year, pays the actual net costs for in-state tuition and fees assessed by the school or \$8,500, whichever is less.

WHAT IS THE ELIGIBILITY PERIOD?

The period of eligibility for the Post-9/11 GI Bill ends 15 years from the date of the last discharge or release from active duty.

TRANSFER OF POST-9/11 GI BILL BENEFITS TO A DEPENDENT

The Post-9/11 GI Bill also offers some service members the opportunity to transfer their GI Bill to their spouse or children. Any member of the Armed Forces (active duty or Selected Reserve, officer or enlisted) on or after August 1, 2009, who is eligible for the Post 9/11 GI Bill, and:

- » Has at least 6 years of service in the Armed Forces on the date of election and agrees to serve 4 additional years in the Armed Forces from the date of election.;
- » Has at least 10 years of service in the Armed Forces (active duty and/or selected reserve) on the date of election, is precluded by either standard policy (service or DoD) or statute from committing to 4 additional years, and agrees to serve for the maximum amount of time allowed by such policy or statute; or
- » Is or becomes retirement eligible during the period from August 1, 2009, through August 1, 2013. A service member is considered to be retirement eligible if he or she has completed 20 years of active duty or 20 qualifying years of reserve service.

An individual approved to transfer an entitlement to educational assistance under this section may transfer the individual's entitlement to:

- » The individual's spouse;
- » One or more of the individual's children;
- » Any combination of spouse and child.

A family member must be enrolled in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System (DEERS) and be eligible for benefits, at the time of transfer to receive transferred educational benefits

Note: After an individual has designated a child as a transferee under this section, the individual retains the right to revoke or modify the transfer at any time.

To apply for the Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefit, complete VA Form 22-1990 found at www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/vba-22-1990-are.pdf or apply online at www.gibill.va.gov.

MONTGOMERY GI BILL

The Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) program, commonly known as Chapter 30, provides up to 36 months of education benefits. Generally, benefits are payable for 10 years following a veteran's release from active duty. This benefit may be used for degree and certificate programs, flight training, apprenticeship/on-the-job training and correspondence courses. The monthly benefit paid is based on the type of training taken, length of service, and whether the Department of Defense (DOD) put extra money in the veteran's MGIB Fund (called "kickers").

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

To be eligible, a veteran must have an honorable discharge, a high school diploma or GED or, in some cases, 12 hours of college credit, and meet the requirements of one of the categories below:

- » **Category I:** Entered active duty for the first time after June 30, 1985; paid \$1,200 into the MGIB program; and continuously served for 3 years, or 2 years if that is what the veteran first enlisted for, or 2 years if the veteran entered the Selected Reserve within a year of leaving active duty and served 4 years ("2 by 4" Program);
- » **Category II:** Entered active duty before January 1, 1977; served at least 1 day between October 19, 1984 and June 30, 1985, and stayed on active duty through June 30, 1988, (or June 30, 1987 if the veteran entered the Selected

Reserve within 1 year of leaving active duty and served 4 years); and on December 31, 1989, the veteran had entitlement left from Vietnam-Era GI Bill;

- » **Category III:** Not eligible for MGIB under Category I or II; on active duty on September 30, 1990 and separated involuntarily after February 2, 1991; or involuntarily separated on or after November 30, 1993; or voluntarily separated under either the Voluntary Separation Incentive (VSI) or Special Separation Benefit (SSB) program; before separation, had military pay reduced by \$1,200;
- » **Category IV:** On active duty on October 9, 1996, had money remaining in a VEAP account on that date, and elected MGIB by October 9, 1997; or entered full-time National Guard duty under Title 32, U.S.C., between July 1, 1985 and November 29, 1989, and elected MGIB during the period of October 9, 1996, through July 8, 1997; had military pay reduced \$100 a month for 12 months or made a \$1,200 lump-sum contribution.

APPRENTICESHIP AND ON-THE-JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS

GI Bill benefits are available for more than college enrollment. Many veterans are not ready or able to commit to a college program, but few veterans and employers know that benefits are also paid to those who are employed and learning a new skill. Use MGIB benefits to learn new skills while training on-the-job and earning a full-time wage.

OJT training usually requires six months to two years for completion for professions such as a cook, machine tool operator, medical secretary, pharmacist assistant, police officer, or paramedic. Apprenticeship is usually much longer than OJT training, lasting from two to five years in length and includes occupations such as aircraft mechanic, automotive technician, electrician, and welder. Approved programs involve a combination of theoretical instruction and skill training.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- » The employer and the veteran agree on a training plan of at least 6 months long, leading to new skills and new pay;
- » The employer contacts the California State Approving Agency for Veterans Education for assistance (www.csaave.ca.gov);
- » The veteran applies to the VA for monthly educational benefits (www.gibil.va.gov);

- » The employer maintains work and training records, evaluates the trainee's progress, agrees to at least one wage increase during the training period, and certifies the trainee's hours to the VA each month.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Veterans and service members eligible for the Montgomery GI Bill (Chapter 30), Post-Vietnam Era Veterans' Education Assistance Program (Chapter 32), Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33), Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 35), and Montgomery GI Bill - Selected Reserve Program (Chapter 1606) are eligible for OJT and Apprenticeship Training programs.

For more information about eligibility, contact the VA at www.gibill.va.gov or call (888) 442-4551. For more information about OJT Programs, contact the CSAAVE at www.csaave.ca.gov or call (916) 503-8007. For more information about Apprenticeship Programs, contact the California Division of Apprenticeship Standards at www.dir.ca.gov/das or call (916) 263-2877.

To apply for the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) education benefit, complete VA Form 22-1990 found at www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/vba-22-1990-are.pdf or apply online at www.gibill.va.gov.

MONTGOMERY GI BILL: SELECTED RESERVE

The Montgomery GI Bill - Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR) Program, Chapter 1606, may be available to a veteran who is a member of the Selected Reserve. The Selected Reserve includes the Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve and Coast Guard Reserve, and the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard. Veterans may use this education assistance program for up to 36 months on a degree program, certificate or correspondence courses, cooperative training, independent study programs, apprenticeship/on-the-job training, and vocational flight training programs. Remedial, refresher and deficiency training are available under certain circumstances.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

To qualify, Reservists and National Guardsmen must meet the following requirements:

- » Have a six-year obligation to serve in the Selected Reserve signed after June 30, 1985. Officers must have agreed to serve six years in addition to the veteran's original obligation. For some types of training, it is necessary to have a six-year commitment that begins after September 30, 1990;

- » Complete initial active duty for training (IADT);
- » Meet the requirement to receive a high school diploma or equivalency certificate before completing IADT. Veterans may not use 12 hours toward a college degree to meet this requirement;
- » Remain in good standing while serving in an active Selected Reserve unit. Veterans were discharged from Selected Reserve service due to a disability that was not caused by misconduct retain MGIB-SR eligibility. The eligibility period may be extended if a veteran is ordered to active duty.

Eligibility for this program is determined by the Selected Reserve components; the VA only makes the payments under this program. Generally, a Reservist has 10 years from the date they first become eligible under this program to use the benefits, provided he/she remains in the Selected Reserve during this time. The 10-year period may be extended if the Reservist is unable to train because of a disability caused by service in the Selected Reserve. If the Reservist is called to active duty, the period of eligibility will be extended by the length of the period of active duty service plus four months.

HOW DO I APPLY?

A veteran will be given a DD Form 2384-1, Notice of Basic Eligibility, from their unit when they become eligible for the program. The unit will also code the veteran's eligibility into the Department of Defense personnel system so VA can verify eligibility. Complete VA Form 22-1990, Application for Education Benefits, and send it to the nearest VA regional office (pg, 23). Veterans who have started training, should take their application and Notice of Basic Eligibility to the school or employer, ask them to complete VA Form 22-1999, Enrollment Certification (not available online), and send all the forms to VA.

To apply for the Montgomery GI Bill: Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR) education benefit, complete VA Form 22-1990 found at www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/vba-22-1990-are.pdf or apply online at www.gibill.va.gov.

RESERVE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (REAP)

The Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP), Chapter 1607, is for members of the Selected Reserves, the Individual Ready Reserves (IRR), and the National Guard who have been called to active duty for 90 consecutive days or longer since September 11, 2001. This is a combined program, jointly administered by VA, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Homeland Security.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

- » A member of a Reserve component who served on active duty on or after September 11, 2001, in support of a contingency operation for 90 consecutive days or more;
- » National Guard members are eligible if their active duty is under section 502(f), Title 32 U.S.C. and they serve for 90 consecutive days when authorized by the President or Secretary of Defense for a national emergency and is supported by federal funds;
- » A member called or ordered to active service while serving in the Selected Reserve remains entitled to benefits under REAP only by continuing to serve in the Selected Reserve. A member called or ordered to active service from the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) remains entitled to benefits under REAP by continuing to serve in the Ready Reserve (either Selected Reserve or IRR).

There is not a specific time in which to use REAP; however, eligibility generally ends when a veteran leaves the Selected Reserves. There is one exception: If a member is separated from the Ready Reserve for a disability which was not the result of the member's own willful misconduct, he or she is entitled to REAP benefits for 10 years after the date of eligibility. Additionally, REAP participants who separated from the Selected Reserve after completing their entire service contract may be eligible for REAP benefits for 10 years after they are separated from the Selected Reserve.

A member called or ordered to active service while serving in the Selected Reserve remains entitled to benefits under REAP only by continuing to serve in the Selected Reserve. A member called or ordered to active service from the IRR remains entitled to benefits under REAP by continuing to serve in the Ready Reserve (either SELRES or IRR); however, a member who is called-up from the Selected Reserve would not remain eligible for REAP if the member goes into the Individual Ready Reserve. The Selected Reserve member must remain in the Selected Reserve to maintain eligibility for REAP.

To apply for the Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP) education benefit, complete VA Form 22-1990 found at www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/vba-22-1990-are.pdf or apply online at www.gibill.va.gov.

POST-VIETNAM ERA VETERANS' EDUCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (VEAP)

The Post-Vietnam Era Veterans' Education Assistance Program (VEAP), Chapter 32, is available if a veteran elected to make contributions from military pay to participate in this education benefit program. Contributions are matched on a \$2 for \$1 basis by the government. A veteran may use these benefits for degree, certificate, correspondence, apprenticeship/on-the-job training programs, and vocational flight training programs. In certain circumstances, remedial, deficiency, and refresher training may also be available.

Benefit entitlement is 1 to 36 months depending on the number of monthly contributions. A veteran has 10 years from the veteran's release from active duty to use VEAP benefits. If there is unused entitlement after the 10-year period, the veteran's portion remaining in the fund will be automatically refunded.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

To be eligible for VEAP, a veteran must meet the following requirements:

- » Entered service for the first time between January 1, 1977 and June 30, 1985;
 - » Opened a contribution account before April 1, 1987;
 - » Voluntarily contributed from \$25 to \$2,700;
 - » Completed the first period of service; and
 - » Were discharged or released from service under conditions other than dishonorable.
- » If a veteran is currently on active duty and wishes to receive VEAP benefits, they must have at least 3 months of contributions available.

Contributions may be withdrawn if the veteran does not meet the basic eligibility requirements, or if the veteran formally request a refund of the contributions withheld.

To apply for the Post-Vietnam Veterans' Education Assistance Program (VEAP) education benefits, complete VA Form 22-1990 found at www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/vba-22-1990-are.pdf or apply online at www.gibill.va.gov.



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EDUCATION

SURVIVORS' AND DEPENDENTS' EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (DEA)

The Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program, Chapter 35, provides education and training opportunities to dependents of veterans who are permanently and totally disabled with a VA rating of 100% due to a service-related condition, or who died while on Active Duty or as a result of a service related condition. The program offers dependents up to 45 months of education benefits, which may be used for degree and certificate programs, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training. In addition, spouses may take a correspondence course. Remedial, deficiency, and refresher courses may be approved under certain circumstances.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

To be eligible for DEA, an individual must be the son, daughter, or spouse of:

- » A veteran who died or is permanently and totally disabled as the result of a service-connected disability. The disability must arise out of active service in the Armed Forces;
- » A veteran who died from any cause while such permanent and total service-connected disability was in existence;
- » A service member missing in action or captured in line of duty by a hostile force;
- » A service member forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power;
- » A service member who is hospitalized or receiving outpatient treatment for a service connected permanent and total disability and is likely to be discharged for that disability.

HOW LONG AM I ELIGIBLE FOR?

- » Children of a veteran who wish to receive benefits for attending school or job training must be between the ages of 18 and 26. In certain instances, it is possible to begin before age 18 and to continue after age 26. Marriage is not a bar to this benefit, but benefits may not be used while a veteran child is on active duty. To pursue training after military service, discharge must not be under dishonorable conditions. The VA can extend the period of eligibility by the number of months and days equal to the time spent on active duty. This extension cannot generally go beyond the 31st birthday; however, there are some exceptions.

- » For a veteran spouse, benefits end 10 years from the date VA finds determines eligibility or from the date of death of the veteran. If the VA rated the veteran permanently and totally disabled with an effective date of 3 years from discharge, a spouse will remain eligible for 20 years from the effective date of the rating. This change is effective October 10, 2008, and no benefits may be paid for any training taken prior to that date;
- » For surviving spouses (spouses of service members who died on active duty) benefits end 20 years from the date of death.

To apply for Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (DEA), complete VA Form 22-5490 found at www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/vba-22-5490-are.pdf or apply for DEA online at www.gibill.va.gov.

Surviving spouses and dependents of veterans who are service-connected disabled, should see the College Tuition Fee Waiver for Dependents section of this book. (pg. 101).

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION & EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (VR&E)

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program (VR&E) is authorized by Congress under Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter 31 (sometimes referred to as the Chapter 31 program). The mission of VR&E is to help veterans with service-connected disabilities of 20% or higher prepare for, find, and keep suitable jobs. For veterans with service-connected disabilities so severe they cannot immediately consider work, VR&E offers services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible.

The VR&E Program is designed to help a service-connected disabled veteran overcome employment handicaps imposed by such disability, so that the veteran is able to find and keep suitable employment as well as achieve maximum independence in daily living. The primary goal of the program is to train disabled veterans for appropriate employment. Education benefits for school attendance may be authorized if that is determined to be the best way to prepare a particular veteran for entry or re-entry into the labor force. Services generally last up to 48 months, but they can be extended in certain instances.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Usually, a veteran must first be awarded a monthly VA disability compensation payment to be eligible for the VR&E Program. In some cases, a veteran may be eligible even if they are not receiving VA compensation. For example, a veteran who is awaiting discharge from the service because of a disability may be eligible.

Veterans must also meet the following conditions:

- » Served on or after September 16, 1940; and
- » Service-connected disabilities are rated at least 20% disabling by VA; and
- » Need vocational rehabilitation to overcome barriers to employment; and
- » Less than 12 years since the VA notified the veteran of qualified service-connected disabilities.

HOW DOES VR&E WORK?

- » An individualized, written agreement of services, resources, and criteria used to achieve successful rehabilitation is outlined.
- » Once the Rehabilitation Plan/Agreement is developed and signed, a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) or case manager will work with the veteran to implement the plan to achieve suitable employment or independent living.
- » The VRC coordinates services such as tutorial assistance, training in job-seeking skills, medical and dental referrals, adjustment counseling, payment of training allowance, if applicable, and other services as required to achieve rehabilitation.
- » Depending on their circumstances, veterans will work with their VRC to select one of the following Five Tracks of services:
 - » Reemployment (with a former employer);
 - » Rapid employment services for new employment;
 - » Self-employment;
 - » Employment through long term services;
 - » Independent living services.
- » The Rehabilitation Plan/Agreement is reviewed annually to determine whether any changes may be needed to better serve the veteran.

Recent legislation now allows those who are eligible for both VR&E benefits and Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to choose the Post-9/11 GI Bill's monthly housing allowance instead of the VR&E subsistence allowance.

To apply for Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Program (VR&E), complete VA Form 28-1900 found at www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-28-1900-ARE.pdf or apply online at www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre.

VA WORK-STUDY PROGRAM

The VA Work-Study Program is available to any eligible veteran or their dependents who are receiving VA education benefits and attending school three-quarter time or more. An individual working under this program may work at a school's veterans office, VA Regional Office, VA Medical Facility, CalVet or other approved State employment office. Work-study students are paid at either the State or federal minimum wage, whichever is greater.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

To apply for an internship with an approved State Office, the student must attain an enrollment certification VA Form 22-1999-6 from their schools veterans office. The veteran will earn an hourly wage equal to the federal minimum wage or the state minimum wage, whichever is greater, for work completed during or between periods of enrollment. If a veteran is in a work-study job at a college or university, the school may pay the veteran the difference between the amount the VA pays and the amount the school normally pays other work-study students doing the same job as the veteran. A veteran may arrange with the VA to work any number of hours during enrollment, but the total number of hours worked cannot be more than 25 times the number of weeks in the enrollment period.

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF ACCEPTABLE WORK?

- » Processing VA paperwork at schools or VA offices.
- » Performing outreach services under the supervision of VA staff.
- » Performing services at VA medical facilities or the offices of the National Cemetery Administration.

The work the veteran actually does will depend on the veteran's interests and the type of work available; however, it must be related to the VA. To apply, complete VA Form 22-8691. For more information about education benefits, contact the local County Veterans Service Office (pg. 163).

OTHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS

TROOPS TO TEACHERS PROGRAM

Troops to Teachers (TTT) is a U.S. Department of Education and Department of Defense program that helps eligible military personnel begin a new career as teachers in public schools where their skills, knowledge and experience are most needed. The TTT program enriches the quality of American education by placing mature, motivated, experienced, and dedicated personnel in our nation's classrooms. Thousands of military retirees, separating active duty personnel, and currently drilling members of the reserve components are discovering new and rewarding careers in teaching our nation's children.

Reflecting the focus of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the primary objective of TTT is to help recruit quality teachers for schools that serve low-income families throughout America. TTT helps relieve teacher shortages, especially in math, science, special education and other high-needs subject areas, and assists military personnel in making successful transitions to second careers in teaching.

Pending availability of funds, financial assistance may be provided to eligible individuals as stipends up to \$5,000 to help pay for teacher certification costs or as bonuses of \$10,000 to teach in schools serving a high percentage of students



from low-income families. Participants who accept the Stipend or Bonus must agree to teach for three years in schools that serve students from low-income families in accordance with the authorizing legislation.

For more information on the California Troops to Teachers Program, go to www.mpttt.org or write to:

California Troops to Teachers, College of Education

San Diego State University

5500 Campanile Drive

San Diego, CA 92182-1100

(619) 594-6325

CHAPTER 5: HOUSING



CALVET HOME LOANS

CalVet offers a great home loan option for veterans purchasing homes in California. A CalVet home loan saves borrowers money and provides home protection that is typically less expensive than that available elsewhere. CalVet has expanded eligibility so that most honorably discharged veterans and active duty service members wanting to buy a home in California are eligible. The CalVet Home Loan program is not the federal VA loan guarantee program. Rather, CalVet is a lender of home loan funds. Like commercial banks, CalVet has a variety of loan options available, one of which is the federal VA guarantee program. Unlike commercial lenders, CalVet offers a robust program that includes low cost home insurance, which covers fire/hazard and earthquake and flood.

CalVet offers loans on:

- » Single Family Homes, Condos, Co-ops, and Mobile Homes on land for up to \$521,250
- » Mobile homes in a park for up to \$175,000 (interest rate is an additional 1%)
- » Farm loans for up to \$625,500
- » Home Improvements for up to \$150,000
- » Rehabilitation for those houses not up to VA standards
- » Construction take-out or construction for building a new home.

Veterans benefit from this great loan program from day one! It is the State of California's way of thanking veterans for their service to this country." This program is available to veterans at no cost to California taxpayers. CalVet Home Loan program features include:

- » Low or no down payment
- » Low fees/closing costs
- » Competitive interest rates
- » Low cost group home insurance - fire/hazard and earthquake and flood only
- » Low home insurance deductibles

LOW DOWN PAYMENT

CalVet home loans are available for up to \$521,250 with no down payment for those who are eligible for a loan guaranty from VA or with a down payment of just 3% of the purchase price for the CalVet 97 loan program.

LOW FEES AND CLOSING COSTS

CalVet obtains a loan guaranty on all loans from the VA. On other loans, CalVet purchases private mortgage insurance. In all cases, a loan guaranty fee of between 1.25% and 3.30% of the loan amount will be charged. Under certain circumstances, the fee may be added to the loan amount. This is a one-time fee, and will not affect the interest rate or monthly installment unless it is financed in the loan. A loan origination fee (common with most loans) of one percent of the loan amount is also charged. This fee must be paid in escrow.

CalVet does not charge many of the closing costs charged by others, e.g., underwriting fee, processing fee, tax service fee, flood certification fee, document fee.

INTEREST RATES

Interest rates for new loans are reviewed frequently to ensure that the rates CalVet offers are competitive in the market. Interest rates are subject to change without notice. Current rates are posted on the CalVet website, www.calvet.ca.gov (Home Loans). A borrower's rate is "locked in" the date of application, and if rates are reduced while the loan is being processed, the borrower will receive the benefit of the lower rate. While technically a variable rate, there is a **50%** cap on increases during the term of the loan.

First-time homebuyers are eligible if the home falls within lower purchase price limits in some counties and their income does not exceed the limits. See "Average Area Purchase Price Limitations - Single Family Residences Revenue Bond Funded Loans" for information on the limits in the veteran's county of residence or answers to other questions, call CalVet at (916) 503-8359 or (866) 653-2510 toll free.

FREE PRE-APPROVAL

In the current real estate market, borrowers need to be pre-approved before placing an offer on a property. CalVet offers pre-approvals at no cost. By completing an application and providing military documents, income and asset verification, CalVet will determine the veteran's eligibility, credit worthiness and loan amount; and CalVet will extend a pre-approval letter to those who meet the guidelines. A preapproval application can be downloaded at www.calvet.ca.gov (Home Loans). Call (916) 503-8359 or (866) 653-2510 toll free to have a pre-approval package sent.

REUSABLE LOANS

A veteran may obtain a new CalVet loan each time they decide to change residences. Once the previous loan has been paid off, a veteran may obtain a new loan with the current features, subject to eligibility and financial qualification.

HOME AND LOAN PROTECTION PLANS

To ensure that the investment is safe and sound, CalVet provides comprehensive protection for the veteran and veteran family. CalVet loan holders get the most comprehensive structural coverage available in California against flood and earthquake damage. Not only does CalVet offer Guaranteed Replacement Cost for these perils, but the deductible is a low \$500 on flood claims, and \$500 or 5% of the coverable loss (whichever is greater) on earthquake and mudslide claims. Should disaster strike, the homeowner will be on the way to recovery in days and at a considerable savings over the costs associated with private policies. Most loans also include Guaranteed Replacement Cost Fire and Hazard coverage, with low premiums and a low \$250 deductible.

CalVet loan holders under the age of 62 at the time of loan funding have the option to purchase life insurance, at competitive group rates, to pay off the full balance of the home loan in the event of death while insured. Both the veteran and veteran's spouse have the opportunity to apply, and there is no disqualification for an existing military disability. Unless the veteran a farm loan with CalVet, the insurance premium will be included in the monthly mortgage payment, so there is no separate bill to pay. CalVet's easy application process usually requires completion of only one form. Coverage ends when the veteran pays the loan in full or the insured reaches the age of 70, whichever occurs first. Veterans can enjoy peace of mind knowing their family home is protected.

LOAN PROCESSING

Veterans may process their loans through the local CalVet office or a certified mortgage broker. CalVet will assist the veteran and real estate agent each step of the way. The agent or broker may coordinate the entire process with CalVet, just as they would do with loans from other lenders. Loan processing functions have been centralized to provide consistent and timely processing. CalVet closes loans within 30 days from receipt of the application.

There are three loan programs available:

- » **CalVet/VA** loans use the VA Loan Guarantee eligibility for loans with no down payment. The VA waives the funding fee for veterans who have a VA disability rating of 10% or higher. This is the way to go for veterans without a lot of cash for the down payment and loan fees.
- » **CalVet 97** loans require only a 3% down payment. If VA eligibility is tied up and the veteran needs a loan that exceeds the VA maximum, this program offers loans up to 125% of the conventional conforming loan limit.
- » **CalVet 80/20** loans with a down payment of 20% (or more) have reduced costs.

Veterans who do not have a CalVet home loan and are considering refinancing their current loans should call at (916) 503-8359 or (866) 653-2510 toll free to see what CalVet has to offer.

ELIGIBILITY

Nearly all veterans purchasing homes in California are now eligible, including veterans who served during peacetime. Only 90 days of active duty and a discharge classified as "Honorable" or "Under Honorable Conditions" are required. Information to confirm the veteran's eligibility is on the DD Form 214. Those currently on active duty are eligible after meeting the 90 days of active duty requirement. A statement of service from the veteran's current command is required. Current members of the National Guard and the U.S. Military Reserves who qualify as first-time home buyers or purchase in certain targeted areas are eligible as well. Former members of the National Guard and or Reserves whose only active duty was for training purposes are not eligible; however, if during service the veteran was ordered to active duty by Presidential Executive Order, the veteran may be eligible. For information about eligibility, call CalVet at or (916) 503-8359 or (866) 653-2510 toll free. More information and applications are available at www.calvet.ca.gov (Home Loans).

MORTGAGE LOAN ORIGINATORS, MORTGAGE LOAN BROKERS, REALTORS AND OTHER REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONALS

Mortgage loan originators, mortgage loan brokers, realtors and other real estate professionals who are interested in serving veterans should call CalVet at (916) 503-8359 or (866) 653-2510 toll free to learn how to work with the CalVet Home Loan program.

HAVING TROUBLE MAKING CALVET HOME LOAN PAYMENTS?

CalVet loan holders who have suffered a hardship and are unable to afford their monthly CalVet home loan payment may qualify for a loan term extension that will reduce the mortgage payment. In addition, distressed loan holders may be eligible for temporary financial assistance from Keep Your Home California, a program available to CalVet loan holders. For details, call the CalVet Collection Unit at (916) 503-8356 or (800) 952-5626 toll free.

Certain state and federal laws may protect service members who are struggling financially because of activation and deployment. The Service Members Civil Relief Act of 2003 (SCRA), formerly known as the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940 (SSCRA), is a federal law that gives all military members some important rights as they enter active duty or are called to deployment. One benefit of the SCRA is the ability to reduce mortgage interest rates to 6% under certain circumstances.

Additionally, the California Military Families Financial Relief Act allows for the deferral of mortgage payments for members of the reserves or National Guard who are called to active duty. Homeowners needing may call the CalVet Loan Servicing Unit at (916) 503-8362 or (800) 952-5626 toll free or send an e-mail to loanserv@calvet.ca.gov.

VA HOME LOAN GUARANTY

VA provides a home loan guaranty benefit and other housing-related programs to help veterans buy, build, repair, retain, or adapt a home for personal occupancy. VA Home Loans are provided by private lenders, such as banks and mortgage companies. VA guarantees a portion of the loan, enabling the lender to provide more favorable terms.

VA home loans can be used to:

- » Buy a home, a condominium unit in a VA-approved project;
- » Build a home;
- » Simultaneously purchase and improve a home;
- » Improve a home by installing energy-related features or making energy efficient improvements;
- » Buy a manufactured home and/or lot.

The guarantee VA provides to lenders allows them to provide veterans with more favorable terms, including:

- » No down payment as long as the sales price does not exceed the appraised value;
- » No private mortgage insurance premium requirement;
- » A limit to the amount that can be charged for closing costs;
- » Closing costs may be paid by the seller;
- » No penalty for paying off the loan off early;
- » Possible VA assistance for those who run into difficulty making payments.

Veterans do not have to be a first-time homebuyer to use the VA Home Loan Guaranty. The benefit may be used more than once so long as the prior VA loan has been sold and the loan paid in full, or a qualified veteran-transferee (buyer) agrees to assume the VA loan and substitute his or her entitlement for the same amount of the entitlement originally used by the veteran seller.

To be eligible, a veteran must have suitable credit, sufficient income, and a valid Certificate of Eligibility. The home must be for the veteran's personal occupancy.

The spouse of a veteran can also apply for home loan eligibility under one of the following conditions:

- » Un-remarried spouse of a veteran who died while in service or from a service connected disability;
- » Spouse of a Service member missing in action or a prisoner of war;
- » Surviving spouse who remarries on or after age 57 and on or after December 16, 2003

(Note: a surviving spouse who remarried before December 16, 2003, and on or after attaining age 57, must have applied no later than December 15, 2004, to establish home loan eligibility. VA must deny applications from surviving spouses who remarried before December 6, 2003 that are received after December 15 2004.);

- » Surviving spouses of certain totally disabled veterans whose disability may not have been the cause of death.

Certain U.S. citizens who served in the armed forces of a government allied with the United States in World War II may be eligible. Individuals with service as members in certain organizations, such as public health service officers, cadets at the United States Military, Air Force, or Coast Guard Academy, midshipmen at

the United States Naval Academy, officers of National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, merchant seaman with World War II service, and others may also apply for eligibility.

After establishing eligibility, the veteran will need a Certificate of Eligibility (COE). The COE verifies to the lender that the veteran qualifies for a VA-backed loan. Veterans may apply for a COE through the lender, online at the eBenefits portal, <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal>, or by completing VA Form 26-1880 (Request for Certificate of Eligibility) and mailing it to:

VA Loan Eligibility Center
Attn: COE (262)
P.O. Box 100034
Decatur, GA 30031

Those unable to print the form may call (888) 768-2132 and follow the prompts for Eligibility. The VA will mail the form. Contact the local County Veterans Service Office (pg. 163) for assistance in completing the application.

THE VETERANS HOMES OF CALIFORNIA

The first Veterans Home in California (VHC) was established in 1884 for Civil War veterans. Today, CalVet operates eight veteran home campuses. These VHC provide residential and long-term care services in a home-like environment that promotes dignity and features individualized care. The homes assist residents to ensure they have coverage to meet their health care needs. Residents enjoy enriched activity opportunities including social events, dances, patriotic programs, volunteer activities, arts and crafts, computer access, shopping trips and other off-site activities.

The VHCs range in size from 60 residents on 20-acre campuses to a 1,000 residents on a 500-acre campus. Each Home is distinctive within its region and offers its own unique environment, levels of care combinations and a range of social and recreational activities. The levels of care include skilled nursing facility (SNF), intermediate care facility (ICF), residential care for the elderly or assisted living (RCFE), domiciliary or independent living (DOM), and SNF memory care for those veterans with symptoms of dementia or Alzheimer's disease.

LOCATION	CAPACITY	LEVELS OF CARE
Barstow	400	DOM, ICF, SNF, SNF Memory Care
Chula Vista	400	DOM, RCFE, SNF
Fresno	300	RCFE, SNF, SNF Memory Care
Lancaster	60	RCFE
Redding	150	RCFE, SNF, SNF Memory Care
Ventura	60	RCFE
W. Los Angeles	396	RCFE, SNF, SNF Memory Care
Yountville	1023	DOM, RCFE, ICF, SNF, SNF Memory Care

LEVELS OF CARE DEFINITIONS

INDEPENDENT LIVING—DOMICILIARY

Domiciliary (DOM) is for residents who may have some functional limitations, but who are able to perform activities of daily living with no assistance or minimal assistance. Non-nursing staff provide supervision. DOM residents have access to the home's other levels of care and medical services. DOM services are available at Barstow, Chula Vista and Yountville.

ASSISTED LIVING—RESIDENTIAL CARE FOR THE ELDERLY

Residential Care Facility for the Elderly (RCFE) is available for residents who require assistance and supervision with some activities of daily living. RCFE services may include care by licensed nurses. A Memory Care program within the RCFE provides a supervised environment for veterans with mild-to-moderate symptoms of confusion, memory loss, or for veterans who have difficulty making decisions. RCFE is available at Chula Vista, Fresno, Lancaster, Redding, Ventura, West Los Angeles and Yountville.

INTERMEDIATE NURSING CARE

Residents in an Intermediate Care Facility (IFC) require intermittent licensed nursing assistance with medications and treatments, and they generally require unlicensed nursing assistance with some daily living activities. IFNC differs from skilled nursing care by the degree of need for the services of licensed nurses. IFC is available at Barstow and Yountville.

SKILLED NURSING CARE

Skilled Nursing Care (SNF) provides the 24-hour services of licensed nurses. It is more comprehensive than intermediate care, but less comprehensive than acute care. SNF patients may receive rehabilitation therapies, nursing, pharmaceutical, activity, and dietary services. A Memory Care program within the SNF level of care provides a supervised environment for veterans with symptoms of moderate-to-severe confusion, memory loss, or for veterans who have difficulty making decisions, solving problems or participating in conversation. SNF is available at Barstow, Chula Vista, Fresno, Redding, West Los Angeles and Yountville.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

OUTPATIENT CLINIC

The outpatient clinic at the VHC is established to serve residents who live in the residential care for the elderly or the domiciliary neighborhoods. These clinics provide primary care and multidisciplinary assessments. The clinics address routine care needs and will arrange visits with medical specialties as needed. Outpatient clinics are available at all VHC.

BASIC ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All eligible veterans are encouraged to apply for admission to VHC. Numerous federal and state laws, regulations, and licensing requirements govern basic admission requirements. California state laws concerning the VHC are contained in the Military and Veterans Code, Sections 1010 through 1050. State regulations concerning VHC are contained in the California Code of Regulations, Title 12, Chapter 4, Sections 500 through 505.



To be admitted to the VHC, veterans must meet the following requirements:

1. Age 55 or over and/or have a significant disability or are homeless;
2. Served on active duty in the U.S. military and were discharged honorably or under honorable conditions;
3. Still able to live independently or qualify for a higher level of care offered at one of the VHC (contact the individual home for clarification on qualifying for a higher level of care);
4. California resident;
5. Enrolled in a qualified federal, state or private health service plan, or have an application for such a plan pending. These plans include Medicare, Medi-Cal, USDVA, Tricare and private insurance coverage. Veterans eligible for Medicare and Medi-Cal, USDVA and Tricare must enroll and maintain coverage or self-pay for medical care;
6. Able to live with and get along with other people in a structured communal environment.

Applications for the VHC can be obtained through the local County Veterans Services Office (pg. 163), or online at www.calvet.ca.gov (Veteran Homes).

VETERANS HOMES OF CALIFORNIA



VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA AT BARSTOW

100 East Veterans Parkway
Barstow, CA 92311
(800) 746-0606



VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA AT CHULA VISTA

700 East Naples Court
Chula Vista, CA 91911
(888) 857-2146



**VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA
AT FRESNO**
2811 West California Avenue
Fresno, CA 93706
(855) 769-5792



**VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA
AT LANCASTER**
45221 30th Street West
Lancaster, CA 93536
(888) 272-6030



**VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA
AT REDDING**
3400 Knighton Road
Redding, CA 96002
(855) 769-5791



**VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA
AT VENTURA**
10900 Telephone Road
Ventura, CA 93004
(888) 272-2104



**VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA
AT WEST LOS ANGELES**
11500 Nimitz Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90049
(877) 605-1332



**VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA
AT YOUNTVILLE**
260 California Drive
Yountville, CA 94599
(800) 404-8387



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Headquarters for the Veterans
Homes Division

1227 O Street, Suite 324

Sacramento, CA 95814

(855) 785-1395

THE PATHWAY HOME PROGRAM

(An independently operated program at the Veterans Home of Yountville)

The Pathway Home Program (PHP) is a residential recovery program specifically created for and dedicated to serve “New Warriors”—those of any age, who served our Nation’s Global War on Terror in areas of the world such as Afghanistan and Iraq. The program helps veterans address their problems and maximize their mental and physical health, coping, resiliency, and overall functioning: whether during post-deployment, re-deployment or when transitioning back to civilian status. PHP provides a variety of residential treatments for combat and other military-related stressors that are done in group format lead by healthcare professionals and with the support of other PHP residents. Each resident plays an important part in working with staff to develop a personal treatment plan. For an application and eligibility information, go to www.thepathwayhome.org or contact the local County Veterans Service Office (pg. 163).

HOMELESS VETERANS PROGRAMS

In 2012, the VA and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) estimated that the number of homeless veterans nationwide to be approximately 62,619. At that time, approximately 25% of homeless veterans were located in California: the highest percentage of any other state. In the last several years, the homeless veteran population in California has been nearly cut in half, but there is still work to be done.

Veterans often suffer from conditions that make it difficult to find and maintain gainful employment and pay for housing. Along with the high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI), the VA has found that approximately 55% of homeless veterans suffer from mental health

issues, 70% are affected by substance abuse issues, and 40% of female homeless veterans report experience severe forms of mental illness, mostly due to higher rates of military sexual trauma (MST).

CalVet is addressing veteran homelessness by working with various government and non-government agencies and organizations, throughout California, to provide advocacy and services needed by the homeless population and those dealing with the threat of becoming homeless. To find housing assistance programs available in the area, call (800) 952-5626 or (800) 221-8998 (Outside California) or go to www.calvet.ca.gov (Veteran Services).

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS OF AFFAIRS HOMELESS PROGRAMS

Every VA Medical Center has a Homeless Veterans Coordinator responsible for helping homeless veterans access VA and community-based care, conducting outreach, case management, referrals to benefits counselors, linkage to healthcare, and housing assistance. For a complete list of VA Healthcare Facilities and Homeless Veterans Coordinators' contact information (pg. 90).

HUD-VASH

Through a cooperative partnership, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Veterans Affairs Supported Housing (HUD-VASH) program provides long-term case management, supportive services, and permanent housing support. HUD provides "Housing Choice" Section 8 vouchers designated for HUD-VASH to participating public housing authorities to assist with rent payment.

To be eligible for this program, veterans must be eligible for VA healthcare, homeless, and participate in case management services to obtain and sustain permanent independent community housing. For eligibility criteria, contact the county's Continuum of Care Coordinator (CoC) (see below), the nearest VA Homeless Veterans Coordinator (pg. 90), or go to www.va.gov/homeless/about_the_initiative.asp#three.

HOMELESS PREVENTION AND RAPID RE-HOUSING PROGRAM

The Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) is a program funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. HUD has awarded funds to eligible cities, counties, and states (HUD does not provide

funding directly to individuals). Individuals needing assistance can access services from an organization in their local community once HPRP funds have been distributed. Contact the veteran's city, county, or state grantee to find out if HPRP funds are available now, whether the veteran is eligible to receive this assistance, and how to access it. For a list of participating agencies, go to www.hudhre.info/documents/hprp_granteecontactinfo.pdf.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR VETERAN FAMILIES

The Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program provides grants and technical assistance to community-based, nonprofit organizations to help very low-income veterans and their families living in or transitioning to permanent housing. Grantees provide eligible veteran families with outreach, case management and assistance in obtaining VA and other benefits. Grantees may also provide time-limited payments to third parties (e.g., landlords, utility companies, moving companies, and licensed child care providers) if these payments help veteran families stay in or acquire permanent housing on a sustainable basis. For more information on the SSVF program and providers, go to www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp.

DOMICILIARY CARE

Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans is designed to provide state-of-the-art, high-quality residential rehabilitation and treatment services for veterans with multiple and severe medical conditions, mental illness, addiction, or psychosocial deficits. For additional information regarding VA homeless prevention programs, go to www1.va.gov/homeless/index.asp.

HOMELESS PATIENT ALIGNED CARE TEAMS

The Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams (H-PACTs) program provides a coordinated "medical home" specifically tailored to the needs of homeless veterans that integrates clinical care with delivery of social services with enhanced access and community coordination. Implementation of this model is expected to address many of the health disparity and equity issues facing the homeless veteran population and result in reduced emergency department use and hospitalizations, improved chronic disease management, improved "housing readiness" with fewer veterans returning to homelessness once housed. For more information, go to www.va.gov/homeless/h_pact.asp.

HOMELESS VETERANS DENTAL PROGRAM

The Homeless Veterans Dental Program provides dental treatment for eligible veterans in a number of programs: Domiciliary, Residential Rehabilitation Treatment, VA Grant and Per Diem, Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residence, Healthcare for Homeless Veterans (contract bed), and Community Residential Care. VA is working to expand dental care to all eligible veterans within this program. For more information, go to www.va.gov/homeless/dental.asp.

HOMELESS VETERAN SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The Homeless Veteran Supported Employment Program provides vocational assistance, job development and placement, and ongoing support to improve employment outcomes among homeless veterans and veterans at-risk of homelessness. Formerly homeless veterans who have been trained as Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists provide these services.

COMPENSATED WORK THERAPY

The Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) program is comprised of three unique programs which assist homeless veterans in returning to competitive employment: Sheltered Workshop, Transitional Work, and Supported Employment. Veterans in CWT are paid at least the federal or state minimum wage, whichever is the higher.

STATEWIDE SERVICES AND OFFICES

California is home to many nonprofit and community based organizations that provide a variety of statewide services to homeless and potentially homeless veterans. For a statewide directory of California homeless service organizations, go to www.calvet.ca.gov (Veteran Services).

CONTINUUM OF CARE

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) allocates HUD homeless assistance grants to organizations that participate in local homeless assistance program planning networks. Each of these networks is called a Continuum of Care (CoC). CoC committees at the city, county and state level coordinate their efforts to identify the needs of local homeless populations, the resources that are currently available in the community to address those needs, and additional resources needed to fill identified gaps. The CoC process is a community-based approach that encourages the creation of collaborative and comprehensive systems to meet the diverse of needs of local homeless populations.

To find contact information for homeless assistance coordinators in Northern California, go to www.hud.gov/local/ca/homeless/continuumcare/nalcoc.cfm. To view contact information for homeless assistance coordinators in Southern California, go to www.hud.gov/local/ca/homeless/continuumcare/scalcoc.cfm.

STAND DOWNS

Stand Downs are typically one- to three-day events organized by community-based veterans services organizations, non-profit organizations, and veterans service organizations with cooperation from a variety of state, federal, and private agencies. Stand Downs provide vital services for veterans, such as: food, shelter, clothing, health screenings, benefits counseling, and referrals to a variety of other necessary services like housing, employment, and substance abuse treatment. In addition, veterans have access to Homeless Courts where they are able to resolve minor violations and warrants.

CalVet allocates discretionary funds in support of statewide Stand Down events annually. Any veteran service provider desiring to conduct a homeless veterans Stand Down may be eligible for a grant from CalVet. For more information call (800) 952-5626.

To volunteer and/or find a list of all California Stand Down events, go to www.calvet.ca.gov (Veteran Services).



CALL CENTERS FOR HOMELESS VETERANS

Trained call center counselors are available 24/7 to offer homeless veterans and veterans at risk of becoming homeless free referrals to local homeless shelters.

- » **National Coalition for Homeless Veterans** is the resource and technical assistance center for a national network of community-based service providers and local, state and federal agencies that provide emergency and supportive housing, food, health services, job training and placement assistance, legal aid and case management support for hundreds of thousands of homeless veterans each year. To find a local shelter, call (800) VET-HELP (838-4357) or visit www.nchv.org.
- » **The National Call Center for Homeless Veterans Hotline** was founded by the VA to ensure that homeless veterans or veterans at risk for homelessness have free, 24/7 access to trained counselors. The hotline is intended to assist homeless veterans and their families, VA Medical Centers, federal, state and local partners, community agencies, service providers and others in the community. To be connected with a trained VA staff member, call (877) 4AID-VET (424-3838).
- » **2-1-1 Information and Referral Search** provides free and confidential information and referral for help with food, housing, employment, healthcare, counseling and more. For more information, call 2-1-1 or go to www.211.org.

National Resource Directory provides access to services and resources at the national, state and local levels that support recovery, rehabilitation and community reintegration. Wounded warriors, service members, veterans, or a family members may go to www.nrd.gov to connect with a caregiver who supports the local area.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WITH UTILITIES

Several organizations throughout California provide financial utility bill assistance for veterans and their family members.

- » **California Alternative Rates for Energy Program (CARE)** offers low-income consumers a 20 percent discount on energy bills. For more information, go to www.cpuc.ca.gov/puc/energy/low+income/care.htm.
- » **The California Public Utilities Commission (PUC)** provides assistance in negotiating a more affordable payment to utility companies if a customer has trouble paying his/her energy, telephone, or water bill. For more information, go to www.cpuc.ca.gov/puc/cec/b_paymentplan.htm.

- » **Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA) Program** provides assistance to families with slightly higher incomes. FERA is available for customers of Southern California Edison, San Diego Gas and Electric Company, and Pacific Gas and Electric Company. For more information, go to www.cpuc.ca.gov/puc/energy/low+income/fera.htm.
- » **The Energy Savings Assistance Program** provides no-cost weatherization for low-income households who meet the CARE income guidelines. For more information, go to www.cpuc.ca.gov/puc/energy/low+income/liee.htm.
- » **The Department of Community Services and Development** can connect people to home energy assistance, energy crisis intervention, and low-income weatherization programs. For more information, go to www.csd.ca.gov.
- » **Lifeline Telecommunications Program** provides a discount for landline service with unlimited local incoming and outgoing calls. For more information, go to www.cpuc.ca.gov/puc/telco/public+programs/ultra.htm.
- » Additionally, some utilities have emergency payment assistance programs for their customers. For more information, go to www.cpuc.ca.gov/puc/energy/electric+rates/billassist.htm.

ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING FOOD

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is the name for the federal food stamp program. The name reflects the changes made to meet the needs of clients, including a focus on nutrition and an increase in benefit amounts. State programs may have different names. The online application system allows individuals to apply for the program through a secured site. For more information, call (877) 847-FOOD (3663) or apply online at www.c4yourself.com.

EMERGENCY FOOD AND SHELTER PROGRAM

The Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) expands the work of local social service agencies (non-profit and government) in assisting people with economic emergencies. United Way serves as the fiscal agent for the EFSP, and EFSP staff is housed in United Way's headquarters. For more information about United Way, go to www.efsp.unitedway.org.

EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Food banks solicit and warehouse donated food and other products. This food is then distributed to a variety of community agencies which serve people in need. Many food banks provide food to hundreds of organizations that would likely not be able to obtain a steady supply of food or store enough food to meet the needs of the people they serve. Some food banks also operate programs that distribute food directly to individuals. To locate a nearby food bank, go to www.cafoodbanks.org or call (866) 321-4435.

VA JUSTICE OUTREACH INITIATIVE

Each VA Medical Center has been asked to designate a facility-based Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist who will be responsible for direct outreach, assessment, and case management for justice-involved veterans in local courts and jails, and liaison with local justice system partners. For more information on the Veteran Justice Outreach Initiative and to find a Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist in the area, go to www.va.gov/homeless/vjo.asp.

HOMELESS COURTS

Homeless courts are special court sessions held in local shelters or other community sites designed for homeless citizens to resolve outstanding misdemeanor warrants. Homeless defendants sometimes fail to appear in traditional courts, not because of disregard for the court system, but because of the status of their condition. Many homeless people are reluctant to attend court given the uncertainty of court proceedings and the threat of custody. Unresolved legal issues can ultimately preclude homeless people from accessing desperately needed services such as employment, housing, public assistance, and treatment programs.

The American Bar Association (ABA) has also developed and approved policies related to homeless courts, including basic principles for homeless court programs, which could be found at www.americanbar.org/groups/public_services/homelessness_poverty/resources/homeless_courts.html.

The ABA Commission on Homelessness and Poverty offers technical support. For information, contact Amy Horton-Newell at the ABA Washington Office at (202) 662-1693 or at homeless@abanet.org.

Homeless Courts are presently operating in the following California counties:

- » Alameda
- » Bakersfield
- » Contra Costa
- » Fresno
- » Humboldt
- » Kern
- » Los Angeles
- » Orange
- » Sacramento
- » San Bernardino
- » San Diego
- » San Joaquin
- » Santa Clara
- » Santa Maria
- » Sonoma
- » Ventura

For more information on Homeless Courts, go to www.calvet.ca.gov (Veteran Services).

VETERAN TREATMENT COURTS

VA studies have found post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) victims typically exhibit more aggressive behavior than non-sufferers, and symptoms can lead indirectly to criminal behavior. Veteran treatment courts offer alternatives to case proceedings that address underlying problems which contribute to criminal activity or other court involvement. Veteran treatment courts lead to the placement of many mentally ill offenders who are veterans of the U.S. military—including those with PTSD, traumatic brain injury, military sexual trauma, substance abuse, or any mental health problem—in VA counseling and treatment programs. In many cases, counseling is required and incorporated into the treatment programs that are designed to treat the underlying psychological disorders. Participating veterans are ordered to complete the recommended treatment plan and comply with any other terms and conditions of probation imposed by the court.

For information on local veteran treatment courts, a veteran's attorney should contact a Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) Coordinator at www.va.gov/homeless/vjo.asp.

For more information on veteran treatment courts located across the country, go to The National Clearinghouse for Veterans Treatment Courts website at www.justiceforvets.org.

HEALTHCARE FOR REENTRY VETERANS

Healthcare for Re-entry Veterans (HCRV) addresses the community re-entry needs of incarcerated veterans. HCRV works to prevent homelessness, reduce the impact of medical, psychiatric, and substance abuse problems upon community readjustment, and decrease the likelihood of re-incarceration for those leaving prison. For more information, go to www.va.gov/homeless/reentry.asp.

COMMUNITY BASED VETERANS SERVICE PROVIDERS

VETERANS VILLAGE OF SAN DIEGO

4141 Pacific Highway
San Diego, CA 92110
(619) 497-0142
(619) 497-0263 (F)
info@vvsd.net
www.vvsd.net

Veterans Village of San Diego (VVSD), also known as Vietnam Veterans of San Diego, is dedicated to extending assistance to needy and homeless veterans of all wars and eras and their families by providing housing, food, clothing, substance abuse recovery and mental health counseling, job training and job search assistance. VVSD operates a residential treatment program that offers veterans up to one year of treatment with case management, classroom instruction, individual therapy, job readiness counseling, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) therapy, if needed. VVSD also operates sober-living programs and programs that serve veterans with children. They are a non-profit agency, but work closely with the VA and provide benefits assistance and referrals. The Warrior Traditions Program provides peer-to-peer, post-combat experience support for any service member who has served in Iraq or Afghanistan.

NEW DIRECTIONS

11303 Wilshire Boulevard, VA Building 116

Los Angeles, CA 90073

(310) 914-4045

(310) 914-5495 (F)

(310) 914-5966 (24-Hour Assistance)

www.newdirectionsinc.org

New Directions assists veterans in becoming healthy, sober, and self-sufficient by offering a wide array of services, including treatment for co-occurring disorders, job training and placement, parenting and money management classes, legal and financial assistance, counseling, remedial education, and resources for alumni. Clients leave New Directions with a job, housing, a savings account, computer skills, renewed self-confidence, and the support of mentors and peers.

U.S. VETERANS INITIATIVE

(213) 542-2600

www.usvetsinc.org

U.S. VETS is the largest non-profit organization in the country that works to reintegrate homeless and at-risk veterans. U.S. VETS offers assistance in Inglewood, Long Beach and Riverside, California through transitional and affordable housing, case management, employment assistance, mental health counseling and substance abuse treatment.

U.S. VETS INITIATIVE - INGLEWOOD

733 S. Hindry Avenue

Inglewood, CA 90301

(310) 348-7600

(310) 645-2605 (F)

www.usvetsinc.org/inglewood

U.S. VETS - Inglewood offers homeless veterans over 500 beds of transitional and permanent housing and a host of support services. Special needs programs include a Non-Custodial Fathers' Program, which offers parenting classes and reunites fathers with their children. The High Barriers Program is designed to address additional barriers some veterans face (such as older workers) in getting back to work.

U.S. VETS INITIATIVE - LONG BEACH

2001 River Avenue
Long Beach, CA 90810
(562) 200-7300
(562) 388-7991 (F)
www.usvetsinc.org/longbeach

U.S. VETS - Long Beach is located at the Villages at Cabrillo, the former 26-acre Cabrillo/Savannah Naval housing site. The site provides a seamless and comprehensive array of services to homeless and at-risk veterans.

U.S. VETS INITIATIVE - RIVERSIDE

15105 6th Street
March Air Reserve Base, CA 92518
(951) 656-6892
(951) 656-6890 (F)
www.usvetsinc.org/index.php/locations/riverside_california

U.S. VETS - Riverside at the March Air Reserve Base provides stable housing and a variety of support services that gives homeless veterans the skills to become self-sufficient.

The project offers services to homeless veterans from both Riverside and San Bernardino counties and hope to the more than 7,000 veterans living on the streets of the Inland Empire. Services include: Outreach and Assessment, Residential Substance Abuse Treatment, Residential Employment Program, Career Center, Senior and Disabled Housing, and Food Services.

SWORDS TO PLOWSHARES

1060 Howard Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 252-4788
(415) 552-6267 (F)
www.swords-to-plowshares.org

Swords to Plowshares works to heal the wounds, to restore dignity, hope, and self-sufficiency to all veterans in need, and to prevent and end homelessness and poverty among veterans. Founded in 1974, Swords to Plowshares is a community-

based, not-for-profit organization that provides counseling and case management, employment and training, housing and legal assistance to veterans in the San Francisco Bay Area.

VIETNAM VETERANS OF CALIFORNIA

www.vietvets.org

The Vietnam Veterans of California (VVC) offers community based services for veterans and their families. VVC has several programs located in Sacramento, Eureka, Santa Rosa and Menlo Park. Their focus is on employment and training support, transitional housing, and alcohol and drug recovery. VVC serves veterans of all eras.

SACRAMENTO VETERANS RESOURCE CENTER

7270 E. Southgate Drive

Sacramento, CA 95823

(916) 393-8387

(916) 393-8389 (F)

www.vietvets.org/svrc.htm

The Sacramento Veterans Resource Center (SVRC) is a multi-function campus with the most comprehensive mix of services for veterans in Northern California.

Employment Counseling & Training: The SVRC helps veterans obtain career training and self-sustaining employment opportunities.

Supportive Housing: The SVRC offers fifty-two onsite and eight offsite beds for homeless veterans, including female veterans with children. Their supportive housing programs offer up to 24 months of stable living, combined with comprehensive supportive services to effectively end the cycle of homelessness and assist veterans in the acquisition of permanent housing and sustainable-wage jobs. The Jon Oberg Center is a state-licensed, 22-bed transitional housing program for veterans and non-veterans in need of drug/alcohol recovery services.

The Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) is a Small Business Administration-funded business center for veterans who own or are interested in starting a small business. In addition to comprehensive consulting provided

by industry experts, VBOC also conducts statewide Town Hall workshops in California, Nevada, and Colorado. These workshops bring both private and public agencies together to provide resources for veterans with small business needs.

NORTH COAST VETERANS RESOURCE CENTER

109 4th Street

Eureka, CA 95501

(707) 442-5852

(707) 442-4113 (F)

www.vietvets.org/ncvrc.htm

Employment Counseling & Training: The North Coast Veterans Resource Center offers career training and self-sustaining employment opportunities, career assessment, counseling, and support services. Eligible veterans who are homeless have access to stable housing.

Supportive Housing: The 12-bed Victorian “Eureka House” provides transitional housing to veterans in Eureka. The veterans residing in the house work toward training, employment and permanent housing goals.

NORTH BAY VETERANS RESOURCE CENTER

2455 Bennett Valley Road, C-105

Santa Rosa, CA 95402

(707) 578-8387

(707) 578-2788 (F)

www.vietvets.org/nbvrc.htm

The North Bay Veterans Resource Center offers career development and job search workshops, with resume preparation instruction, Winning the Employment Game workshop, and transitional housing and training assistance.

INTERFAITH

The Betty & Melvin Cohn Center
550 West Washington Avenue, Suite B
Escondido, CA 92025
(760) 489-6380
(760) 740-0837 (F)

www.interfaithservices.org

Coastal Service Center

2195 Oceanside Boulevard
Oceanside, CA 92054
(760) 721-2117
(760) 721-0351 (F)

Interfaith's programs are designed to overlap, to be comprehensive, and to offer wrap-around services that assist clients in finding long-term solutions that enable them to become self-sufficient. Interfaith provides food, showers, and a roof over their head, clothing, counseling, employment, and ongoing support.

VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA

Volunteers of America Northern California and Northern Nevada

Veronica Williams, Intake Coordinator
10636 Schirra Avenue
Mather, CA 95655
(916) 228-3119
(916) 442-1861 (F)

Volunteers of America's (VOA) Mather location provides temporary assistance to prevent homelessness, case management, housing counseling, and supportive services to prevent homelessness amongst the veteran population. This program is funded using the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) grant.

Volunteers of America Greater Los Angeles

Jim Zenner
Hollywood Veterans Center
4969 Sunset Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90027
(213) 286-0324

The Volunteers of America Greater Los Angeles has several programs to meet the needs of veterans and their families. Like their colleagues in northern California, they too provide services under the SSVF grant, but also provide supportive services for female veterans, transitional housing, residential facilities for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, employment assistance, re-entry services, and low-income housing.

VETERANS TRANSITION CENTER OF MONTEREY

The Veterans Transition Center offers transitional housing on the property formerly known as Fort Ord. The Center's "Coming Home to Patton Park" program offers homeless veterans the tools they need to successfully reintegrate and become self-sufficient. In a clean and sober environment, veterans can access case management services, life skills workshops, substance abuse counseling, and temporary living quarters while they seek employment and permanent housing. The program is tailored to meet the needs of each individual and provides veterans and their families transitional housing for up to 24 months. For more information, go to www.vtcmonterey.org or call (831) 883-8387.

CHAPTER 6: **EMPLOYMENT**



STATE EMPLOYMENT

Most jobs with the State of California can be applied for only after successfully completing a civil service examination.

Special provisions allow veterans to receive preference points when testing for open and open non-promotional examinations requiring college graduation and less than two years of experience. The examination announcement will state whether veterans' preference credits will be granted.

In open examinations and open non-promotional examinations, eligible veterans, widows/widowers of veterans, and spouses of 100 percent disabled veterans receive 10 points. Eligible disabled veterans receive 15 points. Eligible widows/widowers of National Guard veterans and spouses of 100 percent disabled National Guard veterans will receive 5 points. The points are added to the final score only after the candidate has successfully passed all parts of the examination.

When promotional examinations are given by more than one department for the same classification, the veteran can only compete in one examination at a time. Once this selection is made, it cannot be changed for the duration of the promotional list eligibility established for the examination in which the veteran participated. Employees may request a transfer of list eligibility between departments in the same manner as provided for civil service employees.

To be eligible for veterans' preference credits, an individual must be qualified as a veteran. "Veteran" means any person who has served full time for 30 days or more in the Armed Forces in time of war or in time of peace in a campaign or expedition for service in which a medal has been authorized by the government of the United States, or during the period of September 16, 1940, to January 31, 1995, or who has served at least 181 consecutive days since January 31, 1995, and who has been discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable but does not include any person who served only in auxiliary or reserved components of the Armed Forces whose service therein did not exempt him or her from the operation of the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940.

“Disabled Veteran” means any veteran as defined herein who is currently declared by the VA to be 10 percent or more disabled as a result of his or her service; and “100 percent Disabled Veteran” means any veteran as defined herein who is currently declared by the VA to be 100 percent disabled as a result of his or her service. Proof of disability shall be deemed conclusive if it is of VA record.

To apply for veteran’s preference credits, obtain from any State department testing office a copy of CalHR Form 1093 (09/12), “Application for Veterans Preference for California State Civil Service Examinations” or print a copy found at jobs.ca.gov/PDF/SPB1093.pdf. This form, along with a copy of military discharge papers (Member 4 copy of the DD Form 214), should be mailed to:

California Department of Human Resources

Attn: Exam Services

1515 “S” Street, North Building, Suite 400

Sacramento, CA 95811

For more information about veterans’ preference points, contact the California Department of Human Resources at (866) 844-8671.

STEPS TO GETTING A STATE JOB

To apply for state employment, create an account online. Go to jobs.ca.gov and, under “Sign In to My Profile, User I.D.,” select “Create a New Profile”.

After completing the registration process and safely stored the user ID and password for future use, an individual may complete an application or save the profile and return to it later. To find job vacancy listings, go to jobs.spb.ca.gov/wvpos/index.cfm.

PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS

The Employment Development Department (EDD) is California’s designated state workforce agency. The Veterans’ Program is a grant-funded program administered by the EDD Workforce Services Branch. The EDD Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans’ Employment Representatives (LVER) staff are located at the America’s Job Centers of California to coordinate, along with partner agencies, a wide array of services, including but not limited to, employment services, job training, vocational education, supportive services, and participation in community college programs. The DVOP specialists focus their efforts on those economically or educationally disadvantaged veterans who can reasonably be expected to benefit from improved employability as a result of the

receipt of intensive services. These veterans will receive priority service within the America's Job Centers of California, including:

- » Comprehensive assessment of education, skills, and abilities;
- » Employability development plan to identify employment goals, interim objectives, and appropriate services that will enable the veteran to meet his or her employment goals;
- » In-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals;
- » Group and individual career coaching; and
- » Short-term pre-vocational services that may include the development of learning and communication, interviewing, and personal maintenance skills; and professional conduct to prepare individuals for career goals.

The LVER staff reaches out to employers, assists veterans in job development contacts, conducts job search workshops, and establishes job search groups. They also facilitate employment, training, and placement services to promote the hiring of veterans. The LVER concentrates on individualized job development services for veterans, especially those determined to be job ready after receipt of intensive services from a DVOP specialist.

Veterans may qualify for assistance under the Workforce Investment Act which includes:

- » Alternative school services;
- » Follow-up services;
- » Guidance counseling;
- » Leadership development;
- » Mentoring;
- » Occupational skills training;
- » Paid and unpaid work experience (such as internships, apprenticeships, and job shadowing)
- » Supportive services;
- » Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to completion of secondary school.

Special assistance is available for veterans with service connected disabilities. To locate the nearest America's Job Center of California, call the America's Service Locator at (877) US-2JOBS toll free or go to www.americasjobcenter.ca.gov.

CALJOBS

CalJOBS provides online access to California's workforce resources, including employment and labor market information for the State of California. The system allows both employers seeking to fill job openings and individuals seeking employment to easily search for jobs, build résumés, access career resources, and gather information on education and training programs. CalJOBS can be accessed 24/7 using any computer with internet access. It has the largest database of job seekers in California, and provides information about jobs throughout the State.

Veterans receive a 24-hour priority on job listings, can view job opportunities anywhere in California, and can submit applications directly to employers for consideration. For more information, go to www.caljobs.ca.gov.

APPRENTICESHIP

Apprenticeships combine classroom instruction with paid, supervised, on-the-job training by experts in the field. The California Department of Industrial Relations Division of Apprenticeship Standards maintains a database of available apprenticeships by craft and geographic region and ensures that apprenticeships are not exploited. Candidates must meet minimum qualifications, including physical ability and willingness to work under the required job conditions, and apply with an employer in the field, the appropriate union, or EDD. Aptitude and other tests may be required and there may be a waiting list. For a list of local or regional apprenticeship opportunities, go to www.dir.ca.gov/databases/das/aigstart.asp. Interested employers can find information on how apprenticeships work and how to contact the Division of Apprenticeship Standards by going to: www.dir.ca.gov/DAS/Employers.htm.

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

The Unemployment Insurance (UI) program operates under federal and state law to provide benefit payments to eligible workers who have become unemployed through no fault of their own or are working less than full-time at the time they file their claim. The program is financed by contributions from employers who pay a tax based on a percentage of wages of workers covered by the program. Those who have served in the military for the last 18 months and become unemployed should call the EDD immediately to file for UI benefits. When filing for UI benefits, recently discharged veterans must provide information from their Certificate of Release or Discharge Form Active Duty, DD Form 214 or NOAA Form 56-16 (or when not available, Orders to Report, or Orders of Release may be used). If you



do not have this documentation, EDD can help veterans obtain the necessary information to file a claim. The eApply4UI application is available online at www.edd.ca.gov or by calling at (800) 300-5616.

FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT

The federal government has laws providing veterans' preference and special appointing authorities for veterans and recognizes that hiring veterans is just good business.

By law (Title 5 USC, Section 2108), veterans who are disabled or who serve on active duty in the Armed Forces during certain specified time periods or in military campaigns are entitled to preference over non-veterans both in federal hiring practices and in retention during reductions in force.

Furthermore, the National Defense Authorization Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-163) extends veterans' preference to those individuals who served on active duty for a period of more than 180 consecutive days, any part of which occurred during the period beginning on September 11, 2001, and ending on a future date prescribed by Presidential proclamation or by law as the last date of Operation Iraqi Freedom; and, who were discharged or released from active duty in the armed forces under honorable conditions.

Preference does not have as its goal the placement of a veteran in every vacant federal job; this would be incompatible with the merit principle of public employment. It does not apply to promotions or other in-service actions either. However, preference does provide a uniform method by which special consideration is given to qualified veterans seeking federal employment.

Preference applies in hiring from civil service examinations, for most excepted service jobs, and when agencies make temporary appointments or use direct hire and delegated examining authorities from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). The OPM's Vet Guide can be viewed at www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/veterans-services/vet-guide. This Guide explains the special rights and privileges that veterans enjoy in federal civil service employment and how veteran's preference and the special appointing authorities for veterans operate within the system.

When applying for federal jobs, eligible veterans should claim preference on their application or resume. Applicants claiming 10-point preference due to a service-connected disability must complete Standard Form (SF) 15, Application for 10-Point Veteran Preference.

The Department of Labor's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy and Veterans' Employment and Training Service helps veterans determine the type of preference to which they are entitled, the benefits associated with the preference and the steps necessary to file a complaint due to the failure of a federal agency to provide those benefits.

For more information, go to the United States Office of Personnel Management website at www.usajobs.gov or www.fedshirevets.gov.

VIETNAM ERA VETERANS READJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE ACT

Vietnam era veterans, special disabled veterans, and veterans who served on active duty during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized are protected in employment by the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, as amended, 38 USC 4212.

The law requires that employers with federal contracts or subcontracts of \$25,000 or more provide equal opportunity and affirmative action for Vietnam era veterans, special disabled veterans, and veterans who served on active duty during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized.

A Vietnam-era veteran is a person who (1) served on active duty for a period of more than 180 days, any part of which occurred between August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975, and was discharged or released with other than a dishonorable discharge; (2) was discharged or released from active duty for a service connected disability if any part of such active duty was performed between August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975; or (3) served on active duty for more than 180 days and served in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975.

A special disabled veteran is a person who is entitled to compensation under laws administered by the VA for a disability rated at 30 percent or more; or rated at 10 or 20 percent, if it has been determined that the individual has a serious employment disability; or a person who was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability.

As a part of affirmative action, federal contractors and subcontractors are required to list with the local state employment service all employment openings except for executive and top management jobs; jobs which the contractor expects to fill from within; and jobs lasting 3 days or less.

If a covered veteran believes he/she has been discriminated against by a federal contractor or subcontractor, he or she may file a complaint. Complaints may be filed with the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) or through the local Veteran's Employment Representative at a local state employment service office.

If any covered veteran believes a contractor of the United States has failed to comply or refuses to comply with contract provisions relating to the employment of veterans, the veteran may file a complaint with the OFCCP.

For more information about VEVRAA, go to www.dol.gov/compliance/laws/comp-vevraa.htm or call (866) 487-2365 or (800) 397-6251. To locate the district or area office, go to www.dol.gov/ofccp/contacts/ofnation2.htm#California.

CHAPTER 7:

ADVOCACY AND ASSISTANCE



CALIFORNIA COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS

The California Association of County Veterans Service Officers (CACVSO) is an organization of professional veterans' advocates. In California, the County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO) plays a critical role in the veteran's advocacy system and is often the initial contact in the community for veterans' services. Through the CVSO, the CACVSO is committed to providing a vital and efficient system of services and advocacy to veterans, their dependents and survivors.

The CACVSO promotes state and federal legislation and policy supportive of veterans' rights and issues, in harmony with our national obligation to veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States. The association provides a medium for the exchange of ideas, information, training, and support to facilitate the delivery of services to nearly three million California veterans.

The CACVSO recognizes the importance and merit of the congressionally-chartered veterans' service organizations, and is committed to fostering a mutually beneficial relationship with them for the common good of all veterans. It is the intent of this organization that every veteran residing in California receives the benefits and services in which they are entitled to by law.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY MEMBER COUNTIES

A Veteran Service Office can assist:

- » Veterans
- » Widows of a veterans
- » Children of a deceased or disabled veterans
- » Parents who lost a son or daughter in military service

Who have questions about:

- » Compensation
- » Pension
- » Education benefits
- » Life Insurance
- » Healthcare benefits
- » Home loans
- » California veterans state benefits

- » Burial benefits
- » Discharge upgrade

Or need a referral for:

- » Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Treatment
- » Hospitalization
- » Outpatient medical and dental treatment
- » Alcohol and drug dependency treatment
- » Home loans
- » Small Business Administration

Services Offered Include:

- » Claims assistance
- » Client advocacy
- » Case maintenance
- » Information and referral

Program liaison with:

- » VA healthcare services
- » VA vet centers
- » VA regional offices
- » Veterans service organizations
- » CalVet Farm and Home Loan assistance
- » Outreach to the elderly, disabled, Vietnam era veterans, the incarcerated, minorities, and women

DIRECTORY OF COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS

ALAMEDA

Stewart Smith, CVSO

Tracy Murray, AVSR
6955 Foothill Boulevard, Suite 300
Oakland, CA 94605
(510) 577-1926
(510) 577-1947 (F)
Hours: 9:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.
1:00p.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Gail White, VSR

24100 Amador Street, 3rd Floor
Hayward, CA 94544
(510) 265-8271
Hours: (Tue, Thu)

Vet Center

1504 Franklin Street, Suite 200
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 763-3904, ext. 29
Hours: 9:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. (Wed)

Bruce Choy, VSR

39155 Liberty Street, Suite F620
Fremont, CA 94538
(510) 795-2686
Hours: 9:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.
1:00p.m. – 5:00p.m. (Tue, Thu, Fri)

VA Livermore

4951 Arroyo Road
Livermore, CA 94550
By appointment only

AMADOR

Terry Sanders, CVSO

11041 American Legion Way
ALL mail – 810 Court Street
Jackson, CA 95642
(209) 267-5764
(209) 267-0419 (F)
Hours: 7:30a.m. – 4:30p.m. (Mon-Thu)

BUTTE

Hannah Williamson, CVSO

2445 Carmichael Drive
Chico, CA 95928
(530) 891-2759
(530) 895-6508 (F)
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 4:00p.m. (Mon-Thu)

CALAVERAS

Chele Beretz, CVSO

509 East Saint Charles Street
San Andreas, CA 95249
(209) 754-6624
(209) 754-4536 (F)
Hours: 9:00a.m. – 4:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)
By appointment only

Outreach offices:

Call (209) 754-6624 for appointments

135 Larel Street
Angles Camp, CA 95222

1919 Vista Del Largo Drive
Valley Springs, CA 95252

7869 Whiskey Slide Road
Mountain Ranch, CA 95246

2182 Hwy 4
Arnold, CA 95223

COLUSA

Elizabeth Kelly, CVSO

901 Parkhill Street
Colusa, CA 95932
(530) 458-0494
(530) 458-2701 (F)
Hours: 8:30a.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

CONTRA COSTA

Nathan Johnson, CVSO

10 Douglas Drive, Suite 100
Martinez, CA 94533
(925) 313-1481
(925) 313-1490 (F)
Hours: 9:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.
1:00p.m. – 4:00p.m. (Mon-Thu)
9:00a.m. – 12:00p.m. (Fri)

Richmond Outreach Office

100 37th Street, Suite 1033
Richmond, CA 94805
Hours: 9:00p.m. – 12:00p.m.
1:00p.m. – 4:00p.m. (Tue)

Michael Hoffschneider, VSR

400 Hartz Avenue #208
Danville, CA 94526
Hours: 10:00a.m. – 2:00p.m. (Wed)
By appointment only

Brentwood Outstation – Bo Jones

3361 Walnut Boulevard #140
Brentwood, CA 94513
Hours: 9:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.
12:30p.m. – 3:30p.m.
By appointment only

DEL NORTE

Christopher Thorpe, CVSO

810 H Street
Crescent City, CA 95531
(707) 464-2154
(707) 465-0409 (F)
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 12:00pm
1:00pm – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

EL DORADO

Edward Swanson, CVSO

130 Placerville Drive, Suite B
Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 621-5892
(530) 621-2218 (F)
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Senior Center

3050 Lake Tahoe Boulevard
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150
(530) 573-3134
(530) 543-6730 (F)
Hours: 9:30a.m. – 3:30p.m.

FRESNO

Charles Hunnicutt, CVSO

3845 N. Clark Street, Suite 103
Fresno, CA 93726
(559) 600-5436
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 4:00p.m. (Mon-Thu)
8:00a.m. – 12:00p.m. (Fri)

GLENN

Brandon Thompson, CVSO

Cindy Holley, AVSR
525 W. Sycamore Street, Suite A5
Willows, CA 95988
(530) 934-6524
(530) 934-6355 (F)
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

HUMBOLDT

Rena' Maveety, CVSO

825 5th Street, Suite 310
Eureka, CA 95501
(707) 445-7611
(707) 476-2487 (F)
Hours: 8:30a.m. – 12:00p.m.
1:00p.m. – 4:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

IMPERIAL

Roberto Avila, CVSO

2695 S. 4th Street
El Centro, CA 92243
(760) 337-5012
(760) 337-5042 (F)
Hours: 7:00a.m. – 6:00p.m. (Mon-Thu)
7:00a.m. – 5:00pm (Fri)

INYO

Jeff Hollowell, CVSO

Saul Sanabria, ACVSO

County Services Building
207 West South Street
Bishop, CA 93514
(760) 873-7850
(760) 873-7815 (F)
Hours: 7:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Thu)

KERN

Dick Taylor, CVSO

1120 Golden State Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93301
(661) 868-7300
(661) 631-0519 (F)
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

400 North China Lake Boulevard
Ridgecrest, CA 93555
(760) 375-1564, ext. 226
Hours: 10:00a.m. – 3:00p.m.

750 Lake Isabella Boulevard
Lake Isabella, CA 93240
Hours: 9:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.
(1st & 3rd Thu)

KINGS

Joe Wright, CVSO

Kings County Government Center
1400 W. Lacey Boulevard,
Law Building #4
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 852-2659
(559) 584-0438 (F)
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

LAKE

Jim Brown, CVSO

Bob Penny, AVSO
255 N. Forbes Street
Lakeport, CA 95453
(707) 263-2384
(707) 262-1861 (F)
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.
1:00p.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

V.A. Clinic

15145 Lakeshore Drive

Clearlake, CA 95422

(707) 994-7200

Hours: 8:00a.m. – 4:30p.m. (Mon, Wed)

LASSEN**Todd Conner, CVSO**

Veterans Memorial Building

1205 Main Street

Susanville, CA 96130

(530) 251-8192

(530) 251-4901 (F)

Hours: 8:00a.m. – 5:30p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Additional hours by appointment

LOS ANGELES**Stephanie Stone, CVSO**

1816 S. Figueroa Street

Los Angeles, CA 90015

(213) 744-4825

Christopher Duarte, VSR

Chatsworth Veteran Center

20946 Devonshire Street, Suite 101

Chatsworth, CA 91311

(818) 576-0201

(818) 576-0216 (F)

Robert Ortiz, VSR

335 E. Avenue K-10

Lancaster, CA 93535

(661) 974-8842

(661) 723-5247 (F)

Ernest Hughes, VSR

11301 Wilshire Boulevard

Building 206, Room B-29

Los Angeles, CA 90073

(310) 478-3177, ext. 48425

(310) 268-4153 (F)

Peter Roman, VSR

17600 'B' Santa Fe Avenue

Rancho Dominguez, CA 90221

(310) 761-2221

(310) 635-7024 (F)

Hours: (Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri)

Armand Assayag, VSR

5901 E. 7th Street, Room 217

Long Beach, CA 90822

(562) 826-8000, ext. 4657

(562) 826-5284 (F)

David Schack, VSR

Santa Clarita Valley Service Center

24271 Main Street

Newhall, CA 91321

(661) 254-3413

(661) 255-8620 (F)

Hours: (Thu, Fri)

Frances Govens, VSR

5730 Uplander Way, Suite 100

Culver City, CA 90230

(310) 641-0326

(310) 641-2653 (F)

Frank Valencia, VSR

1427 West Covina Parkway

West Covina, CA 91790

(626) 813-3402

(626) 338-4481 (F)

Ruben Trejo, VSR

Antelope Valley Senior Center
777 Jackman Street
Lancaster, CA 93534
(661) 726-4410
(661) 940-7947 (F)
Hours: (Mon, Tue, Fri)

Joseph Sapien

Sepulveda VA
16111 Plummer Street
Building 22, Room 218
Sepulveda, CA 91343
(818) 891-7711, ext. 9146
(818) 895-9493 (F)

MADERA**Charles Hunnicutt, CVSO**

200 West 4th Street
Madera, CA 93637
(559) 675-7766
(559) 675-7911 (F)
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Oakhurst CBOC

40597 West Lake Drive
Oakhurst, CA 93644
(559) 683-5300
(559) 683-5303 (F)

MARIN**Sean Stephens, CVSO**

10 N. San Pedro Road, Suite 1010
San Rafael, CA 94903
(415) 473-6193
(415) 473-3166 (F)
Hours: 8:30a.m. – 4:00p.m. (Mon-Thu)

MARIPOSA**Robert Johns, CVSO**

5085 Bullion Street
Mariposa, CA 95338
(209) 966-3696
(209) 966-3293 (F)
Hours: 9:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. (Tue, Wed)

MENDOCINO**Alice Watkins, CVSO**

405 Observatory Avenue, P.O. Box 839
Ukiah, CA 95482
(707) 463-4226
(707) 463-4637 (F)

360 North Harrison Street
Fort Bragg, CA 95437
(707) 964-5823
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 12:00p.m. (Thu, Fri)

189 North Main Street
Willits, CA 95490
(707) 456-3792

MERCED**James Kanabay, CVSO**

3376 North Hwy 59, Suite D
Merced, CA 95341
(209) 385-7588
(209) 725-3848 (F)
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

MODOC

Harry Hitchings, CVSO

202 4th Street, Suite F
Alturas, CA 96101

(530) 233-6209

(530) 233-1235 (F)

Hours: 9:00a.m. – 12:15p.m.

1:00p.m. – 4:00p.m. (Mon-Thu)

MONO

Jeff Hallowell, CVSO

Saul Sanabria, ACVSO
County Services

207 West South Street
Bishop, CA 93514

(760) 873-7851

(760) 872-1610 (F)

MONTEREY

George Dixon, CVSO

1200 Aguajito Road, Room #003
Monterey, CA 93940

(831) 647-7613

(831) 647-7618 (F)

Hours: 8:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.

1:00p.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Seaside-Ft. Ord

3401 Engineer Lane
Seaside, CA 93955

(831) 647-7613

Salinas

1000 South Main Street, Suite 209A
Salinas, CA 93901

(831) 647-7613

King City

522 North 2nd Street
King City, CA 93930
(831) 647-7613

NAPA

Patrick Jolly, CVSO

900 Coombs Street, Suite 257
Napa, CA 94559

(707) 253-6072

(707) 299-1489 (F)

Hours: 8:00a.m. – 4:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

NEVADA

Pamela Davinson, CVSO

255 South Auburn Street
Grass Valley, CA 95945

(530) 273-3396

(530) 272-3182 (F)

Hours: 8:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

ORANGE

John Parent, CVSO

1300 South Grand Avenue, Boulevard B
Santa Ana, CA 92705

(714) 480-6555

(714) 567-7674 (F)

Hours: 8:00a.m. – 4:00p.m.

(Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri)

9:30a.m. – 4:00p.m. (Tue)

PLACER

Jonn Melrose, CVSO

1000 Sunset Boulevard, Suite 115
Rocklin, CA 95765
(916) 780-3290
(916) 780-3299 (F)
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.
1:00p.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

PLUMAS

Jimmy LaPlante, CVSO

Health & Human Services Center
270 County Hospital Road, Suite 206
Quincy, CA 95971
(530) 283-6275 or 800-219-5295
(530) 283-6425 (F)
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

RIVERSIDE

William J. Earl, CVSO

4360 Orange Street
Riverside, CA 92501
(951) 276-3060
(951) 955-6061 (F)
Hours: 9:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Thu)

Clinton Hollins, VSR

44-199B Monroe Street
Indio, CA 92201
(760) 863-8266
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Thu)

Hemet Outreach Center

749 North State Street
Hemet, CA 92543
(951) 766-2566
(955) 766-2567 (F)
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.
1:00p.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Thu)

SACRAMENTO

Lester Heatley, CVSO

2007 19th Street
Sacramento, CA 95818
(916) 875-3670
(916) 874-8868 (F)
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

2433 Marconi Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95821
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

SAN BENITO

George Dixon, CVSO

Helen Pickard, VSR
1200 Aguajito Road, #003
Monterey, CA 93940
(831) 647-7613
(831) 647-7618 (F)
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.
1:00p.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Thu)
8:00a.m. – 12:00p.m. (Fri)

SAN BERNARDINO

Bill Moseley, CVS0

175 West 5th Street, 2nd Floor
San Bernardino, CA 92415
(909) 387-5516
(909) 387-6090 (F)
Hours: 8:30a.m. – 4:30p.m. (Mon-Thu)
8:00a.m. – 4:00p.m. (Fri)

Yucca Valley Outreach Center

56357 Pima Trail
Yucca Valley, CA 92284
(760) 228-5234
Hours: 9:00a.m. – 3:00p.m. (Tue)

Hesperia Outreach Center

15900 Smoke Tree Street
Hesperia, CA 92345
(760) 995-8010
(760) 995-8020 (F)
Hours: 8:30a.m. – 4:30p.m. (Mon-Thu)

Rancho Cucamonga Outreach Center

8575 Haven Avenue
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 92311
(909) 948-6420
(909) 465-5245
Hours: 8:30a.m. – 4:30p.m. (Mon, Thu)

Village Center Building 1551

MCAGCC
29 Palms, CA 92277
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 4:00p.m. (Wed, Thu)

SAN DIEGO

Tom Splitgerber, CVS0

5560 Overland Drive, Suite 310
San Diego, CA 92123
(858) 694-3222
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 4:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Oceanside Outreach Center

1300 Rancho Del Oro Road, Room 138
Oceanside, CA 92056
(760) 643-2049
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 3:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Chula Vista Veterans Home

700 E. Naples Court, Room A-159
Chula Vista, CA 91911
(619) 482-6010
Vet Office (Dennie)
(619) 205-1173
(619) 205-1129 (F)

Escondido VA Clinic

815 E. Pennsylvania Avenue
Escondido, CA 92025
(760) 466-7020
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 4:30p.m. (Tue-Thu)

San Marcos Vet Center

1 Civic Center Drive, Suite 150
San Marcos, CA 92069
(855) 898-6050
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 3:00p.m. (Wed)

La Jolla VA Medical Center

VA Transition Center
3350 La Jolla Village Drive
San Diego, CA 92161
(858) 552-8585, ext. 1813

Chula Vista Vet Center

180 Otay Lake Road, Street 108
Bonita, CA 91902
(877) 618-6534
Hours: 7:00a.m. – 4:00p.m. (Fri)

Escondido Veterans Services

247 S. Kalmia Street
Escondido, CA
(460) 480-1657
(760) 480-1124
Hours: 9:00a.m. – 3:00p.m.

SAN FRANCISCO

Shan Yue, ACVSO

27B Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102
(800) 807-5799
(415) 503-2000
(415) 379-5613
(415) 503-2010 (F)
Hours: 9:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.
1:00p.m. – 4:00p.m. (Mon-Thu)

SAN JOAQUIN

Ron Green, CVSO

105 S. San Joaquin Street
Stockton, CA 95202
(209) 468-2916
(209) 468-2918 (F)
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

SAN LUIS OBISPO

Dana M. Cummings, CVSO

801 Grand Avenue
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408
(805) 781-5766
(805) 781-5769 (F)
Hours: 9:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

SAN MATEO

Interim, Diana Kremer, CVSO

400 Harbor Boulevard, Building B
Belmont, CA 94002
(650) 802-6598
(650) 595-2419
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

SANTA BARBARA

Rhonda Murphy, CVSO

511 East Lakeside Parkway, Room 126
Santa Maria, CA 93455
(805) 737-7900
(805) 346-7158 (F)
Hours: 7:30a.m. – 4:30p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Santa Barbra Outreach Center

315 Camino Del Remedio
Building 2, Room 251
Santa Barbara, CA 93110
(805) 681-4500
(805) 681-4501 (F)
Hours: 7:30a.m. – 11:00a.m.
2:00p.m. – 4:30p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Lompoc Outreach Center

401 East Cypress Avenue, Room 101
Lompoc, CA 93436
Hours: 7:30a.m. – 12:00p.m.
1:00p.m. – 4:30p.m. (Mon-Fri)

SANTA CLARA

Richard Herrera, CVSO

68 North Winchester Boulevard

Santa Clara, CA 95050

(408) 553-6000

(408) 553-6016

Hours: 8:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.

1:00p.m. – 4:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

SANTA CRUZ

Christopher Lopez, CVSO

Physical Address:

1400 Emeline Avenue, 3rd Floor

Santa Cruz, CA 95060

(831) 454-4761

(831) 454-4290 (F)

Hours: 8:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.

1:00p.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Thu)

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 1039

Santa Cruz, CA 95061

Watsonville Outreach Center

215 East Beach Street

Watsonville, CA 95076

(831) 454-4761

(831) 454-4290 (F)

Hours: (Thu)

By appointment only

SHASTA

Robert W. "Bob" Dunlap, CVSO

1855 Shasta Street

Redding, CA 96001

(530) 225-5616

(530) 245-6454 (F)

Hours: 8:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.

1:00p.m. – 4:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

SISKIYOU

Tim Grenvik, CVSO

105 East Oberlin Road

Yreka, CA 96097

(530) 842-8010

(530) 841-4314 (F)

Hours: 8:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.

1:00p.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Thu)

SOLANO

Theodore Puntillo, CVSO

675 Texas Street, Suite 4700

Fairfield, CA 94533

(707) 784-6590

(707) 784-0927 (F)

Hours: 9:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.

1:00p.m. – 4:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

SONOMA

Chris Bingham, CVSO

3725 Westwind Boulevard, Suite 101

Santa Rosa, CA 95402

(707) 565-5960

(707) 565-5980 (F)

Hours: 9:00a.m. – 4:00p.m. (Mon-Thu)

Friday walk-ins

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 4059
Santa Rosa, CA 95402

STANISLAUS

Jim Greer, CVSO
121 Downey Avenue, Suite 102
Modesto, CA 95354
(209) 558-7380
(209) 558-8648 (F)
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 4:30p.m. (Mon-Fri)

SUTTER

Marvin D. King Jr., CVSO
Ronald Cook, VSR
5730 Packard Avenue, Suite 300
Marysville, CA 95901
(530) 749-6710
(530) 749-6711 (F)
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

TEHAMA

Bill Johnson, CVSO
633 Washington Street, Room 15
Red Bluff, CA 96080
(530) 529-3664
(530) 529-7933 (F)
Hours: 12:00p.m. – 4:00p.m. (Mon-Thu)

TRINITY

Patrick Meagher, CVSO
100 Memorial Drive
Weaverville, CA 96093
(530) 623-3975
(530) 623-8365 (F)
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 4:30p.m. (Mon-Wed)
8:00a.m. – 2:00p.m. (Thu)

TULARE

Ken Cruickshank, CVSO
205 North L Street
Tulare, CA 93274
(559) 684-4960
(559) 685-3370 (F)
Hours: 7:30a.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Thu)
8:00a.m. – 12:00p.m. (Fri)

TUOLUMNE

Eric Larson, CVSO
Michelle McMaster, SVSR
105 East Hospital Road
Sonora, CA 95370
(209) 533-6280
(209) 533-6282 (F)
Hours: 9:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.
1:00p.m. – 4:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

VENTURA

Mike McManus, CVSO
855 Partridge Drive, 1st Floor
Ventura, CA 93003
(805) 477-5155
(805) 477-5418 (F)
Hours: 8:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

YOLO

Billy P. Wagster, CVSO
Katey Galloway, VSR
120 West Main Street, Suite A
Woodland, CA 95695
(530) 406-4850
(530) 666-7456 (F)
Hours: 7:30a.m. – 12:00p.m.
1:00p.m. – 4:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

YUBA

Marvin D. King Jr., CVSO

Ronald Cook, VSR

5730 Packard Avenue, Suite 300

Marysville, CA 95901

(530) 749-6710

(530) 749-6711 (F)

Hours: 8:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. (Mon-Fri)

DIRECTORY OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR SOCIETY

National Headquarters
Victoria Kueck,
Director of Operations
40 Patriots Point Road
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464
(843) 884-8862

www.cmoahs.org

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

1510 J Street, Suite 110
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 449-8850
(816) 756-3390
administrator@vfwca.org

www.vfw.org

CA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS, INC.

Amy Fowler
5560 Overland Avenue, Suite 310
San Diego, CA 92123
(858) 694-3222
(858) 505-6961 (F)
amy.fowler@sdcounty.ca.gov

www.cacvso.org

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES OF AMERICA POWS/MIAS

Mark Stephensen, Regional Coordinator
846 Dogwood Place
Eagle, ID 83616
(208) 939-8288
mark.stephensen@pow-miafamilies.org

MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART

MOPH Room 1145N
VA Regional Office
1301 Clay Street
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 834-0612
(703) 642-5360
(510) 637-1239 (F)
richard.silbert@va.gov

www.purpleheart.org

THE AMERICAN LEGION

Bill Siler III, Adjutant
401 Van Ness Avenue, Room 117
San Francisco, CA 94102-4587
(415) 431-2400
maryj@calegion.org

www.legion.org

www.calegion.org

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS:
DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA**

Daniel Contreras, Adjutant
13733 E. Rosecrans Avenue
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670
(562) 404-1266
(859) 441-7300
davcaadj@aol.com

www.dav.org

**NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION
OF CALIFORNIA**

Jim Lubey, Executive Director
3336 Bradshaw Road, Suite 230
Sacramento, CA 95827
(916) 362-3411
(916) 362-3707 (F)
jimlubey@ngac.org

www.ngac.org

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

P.O. Box 3007
Riverside, CA 92519-3007
(301) 585-4000

www.vva.org

www.vvacalsc.com

**AMVETS DEPARTMENT
OF CALIFORNIA**

Rod Blackman, Executive Director
120 North M Street
Tulare, CA 93274
(877) 526-1339
(559) 688-3407
(559) 688-4418 (F)
rblackman@teamamvet.org

www.amvets.org

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA

National Headquarters
801 Eighteenth Street NW
Washington, DC 20006-3517
(800) 424-8200
info@pva.org

www.pva.org

**BAY AREA & WESTERN PARALYZED
VETS OF AMERICA**

Richard Kratt, President
3801 Miranda Avenue
Building 101, Room E-118
Palo Alto, CA 94304
(650) 858-3936
(650) 855-9019 (F)

www.bawpva.org

FILIPINO VETERANS ASSOCIATION

Dr. Jenny Batongmalaque,
Executive Director
2615 S. Grand Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90007
(213) 744-4826

**ALLIED COUNCIL OF THE
VETERANS HOME**

Veterans Home of California-
Yountville
60 California Drive
Yountville, CA 94599
(707) 944-4933

**NON COMMISSIONED
OFFICERS ASSOCIATION**

9330 Corporate Drive, Suite 701
Selma, TX 78154
(800) 662-2620
(703) 549-0311 (F)
www.ncoausa.org

VETERANS VILLAGE OF SAN DIEGO

Phil Landis, President and CEO
4141 Pacific Highway
San Diego, CA 92110
(619) 393-2000
(619) 497-0263 (F)
phil.landis@vvsd.net
www.vvsd.net

JEWISH WAR VETERANS

1811 R Street NW
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 265-6280
(202) 234-5662 (F)
www.jwv.org

VETERANS RESOURCE CENTERS

Administrative Offices
P.O. Box 378
Santa Rosa, CA 95402
vvc@vetsresource.org
www.vetsresource.org

BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION

CA Regional Office
8810 Rio San Diego Drive, Room 1154
San Diego, CA 92108
(619) 400-5306
(800) 669-7079
www.bva.org

AMERICAN GI FORUM OF CALIFORNIA

Duane Goff, State Commander
19801 Sun Court
Tehachapi, CA 93561
(661) 557-1929
kernagif@gmail.com
www.agif.org

**NATIVE AMERICAN
VETERANS ASSOCIATION**

P.O. Box 2075
Downey, CA 90242
info@navavets.org
www.navavets.org

**WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS
VETERANS ASSOCIATION**

info@armywomen.org
www.armywomen.org

AMERICAN EX-PRISONERS OF WAR

Clydie J. Morgan
3201 E. Pioneer Parkway, Suite 40
Arlington, TX 76010
(817) 649-2979
hq@axpow.org
www.axpow.org

**BLUE STAR MOTHERS OF
AMERICA INC.**

Pat Soler, National President
5533 Terra Granada #1A
Walnut Creek, CA 94595
president@bluestarmothers.org
www.bluestarmothers.org

SOCIETY OF MILITARY WIDOWS

5535 Hempstead Way
Springfield, VA 22151
(800) 842-3451
(703) 750-1342, ext. 1005

www.militarywidows.org

SWORDS TO PLOWSHARES

1060 Howard Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 252-4788
supportvets@stp-sf.org

www.swords-to-plowshares.org

WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT

2468 Historic Decatur Road
Building 905, Suite 150
San Diego, CA 92106
(619) 981-9642
(877) 832-6997

www.woundedwarriorproject.org

**UNITED MEXICAN-AMERICAN
VETERANS ASSOCIATION**

143 S. Lemon Street
Orange, CA 92856
commander@umava.org

www.umava.org

**MILITARY OFFICERS
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA –
CA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS**

Dr. John H. Sammons (CDR)
2011 Feliz Rd
Novato, CA 94945-1702
(415) 897-5845
jhsammons@gmail.com

www.calmoaa.org



MINORITY VETERANS

California is a richly diverse state with an equally diverse veteran population. While minority veterans comprise approximately 33 percent of the total California veteran population, as a group they are less likely to access their VA benefits than non-minority veterans. Therefore, outreach efforts have been implemented at the federal and state levels to identify barriers to services and healthcare access and to develop strategies for improving minority participation in existing VA benefit programs. The Minority Veterans Division is the California Department of Veterans Affairs model for inter- and intra-agency cooperation to ensure all veterans receive equal service regardless of race, origin, religion, or gender. CalVet is process improvement-oriented and both internal and external customer-centric. CalVet assists VA in executing its mission in the most equitable, efficient and humane way possible.

MINORITY VETERANS SUPPORT

Additional minority veteran information and/or resources can be found on the following websites:

- » **Center for Minority Veterans**
www1.va.gov/centerforminorityveterans
- » **VA Center for Veterans Enterprise & Business**
www.vetbiz.gov
- » **VA Benefits for Veterans of Enduring Freedom-Iraqi Freedom**
www.oefoif.va.gov

- » **Swords to Plowshares, Veterans Rights Organization**
www.stp-sf.org
- » **African-American Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Association**
www.aaptsdassn.org
- » **National Japanese-American Veterans Council**
www.veteranscouncil.com
- » **American G.I. Forum**
www.agif.org
- » **National Native American Veterans Association**
www.manataka.org
- » **Jewish War Veterans of the USA**
www.jwv.org
- » **National Association for Black Veterans, Inc,**
www.nabvets.org
- » **National Association of Black Military Women (NABMW)**
www.nabmw.com

To view the comprehensive Directory of Veterans Service Organizations for 2012-2013 go to www.va.gov/vso/VS0-Directory_2012-2013.pdf. This is published as an informational service by the Office of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Inclusion of an organization in the directory does not constitute approval or endorsement by VA or the United States Government of the organization or its activities. Some veteran service organizations are “chartered”, which means they are federally chartered and/or recognized or approved by the VA Secretary for purposes of preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims under laws administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Inclusion of non-chartered organizations does not constitute or reflect VA recognition of said organization and its representatives for purposes of representation of VA claimants.

For assistance, call the Minority Veterans line at (916) 653-1402 or the Deputy Secretary for Minority Veterans at (916) 651-5040 any time.

LOCAL INDIAN HEALTH SERVICES

The primary goal of the California Area Indian Health Services is to raise the health status of American Indians to the highest possible level. To achieve this goal, the California Area Indian Health Services supports tribal governments and urban Indian communities in the development and administration of comprehensive healthcare delivery systems that meet the needs of Indian people. For more information about the California Area Indian Health Services, go to www.ihs.gov.

WOMEN VETERANS

Women veterans are a vital part of the veteran population in California and the United States Armed Forces. In 2013, California was home to 185,269 women veterans. The CalVet Division for Women Veterans Affairs provides information, advocacy, outreach and support to all women veterans and their families in California. The Division also seeks to ensure that women veterans are aware of their federal and state benefits so that they can obtain the unique services that are available to them. Outreach efforts continue to expand so that assistance can be provided to facilitate easy access to and utilization of services that address the needs of women veterans.

CALIFORNIA WOMEN VETERAN PROGRAMS

CALIFORNIA WOMEN VETERANS ROSTER

The CalVet Division for Women Veterans Affairs and the Commission on the Status of Women and Girls want all women veterans to know about their benefits, services and resources available to them. Many women veterans do not know what they are eligible to receive or may qualify for. As part of this roster, woman veterans will receive updated information about benefits, programs, services and resources throughout California.

This form is available at the following websites:

- » **CalVet Women Veterans**
www.calvet.ca.gov (Women Veteran Program)
- » **California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls**
www.women.ca.gov



CALIFORNIA WOMEN VETERANS LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

The purpose of the Conference is to empower women veterans to live healthy, happy lives, become successful leaders in their communities and to advocate on behalf of other women. www.calvet.ca.gov (Women Veteran Program).

WOMEN'S MILITARY HISTORY WEEK

Each year, the Governor may proclaim the third week of March as Women's Military History Week. During the entire month of March, CalVet recognize the many achievements of women and we especially honor the contributions of those that have served in the Armed Forces. www.calvet.ca.gov (Women Veteran Program).

CALIFORNIA WOMEN VETERAN'S SURVEY

CalVet, the California Research Bureau, and the Commission on the Status of Women and Girls are preparing a third Statewide Survey of California Women Veterans for release in the summer of 2013. The goal of this survey is to help us understand who California's women veterans are, how they use services, and what needs they have. www.calvet.ca.gov (Women Veteran Program).

FEDERAL WOMEN VETERAN PROGRAMS

Women Veterans Call Center: 1-855-VA-WOMEN (1-855-829-6636)

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

The Veterans Health Care Act of 1992 has authorized new and expanded services for women veterans. These services include: counseling for trauma related to sexual assault on a priority basis; specific health care services such

as Pap smears, mammography, and general reproductive health care at many VA facilities; and mental services to include substance abuse counseling, evaluation, and treatment of military sexual trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The Women Veterans Health program promotes the health, welfare, and dignity of women veterans and their families by ensuring equitable access to timely, sensitive, and quality health care. There is a full-time women veteran's program manager at every VA Medical Center, a women's liaison at every community-based outpatient clinic, and a Women Veterans Coordinator at every regional office.

VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

The Women Veterans Coordinator will assist women veterans with the development of claims and assist in handling them for gender-specific conditions, including trauma from sexual assault and harassment. Additionally, a special pocket guide has been developed that describes benefits and services for women veterans titled "Women Veterans: 25 Frequently Asked Questions." To view the pocket guide, go to www.va.gov/womenvet/docs/25FAQs-March2011-final.pdf.

Woman veterans seeking assistance may call the CalVet Women Veterans line at any time by dialing (916) 653-2327 or may email the Women Veterans Affairs Division at Womenveterans@calvet.ca.gov.

STATE RESOURCES

- » **California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet)**
www.calvet.ca.gov
- » **California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls**
www.women.ca.gov
- » **California Research Bureau**
www.library.ca.gov/crb/CRBReports.html
- » **Employment Development Department**
www.edd.ca.gov/jobs_and_training/services_for_veterans.htm#WomenVeteransResources
- » **California Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CALCASA)**
www.calcasa.org

FEDERAL RESOURCES

- » DoD Policy on Prevention and Response to Sexual Assault
www.sapr.mil
- » Sexual Assault Support Helpline/DoD
www.safehelpline.org
- » Department of Labor, Women's Bureau
www.dol.gov/wb/programs/listeningsessions.htm

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS RESOURCES

- » The Center for Women Veterans
www.va.gov/womenvet
- » Veterans Health Administration
www.womenshealth.va.gov
- » Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents
www1.va.gov/opa/vadocs/fedben.pdf
- » National Center for PTSD
www.ncptsd.va.gov
- » VA Benefits for Veterans of Enduring Freedom
www.vba.va.gov/efif
- » VHA Online Health Eligibility
www.va.gov/healtheligibility
- » Homeless Veteran Programs
www.va.gov/homeless/index.cfm
- » Office of Diversity and Inclusion (LGBT)
www.diversity.va.gov/programs/lgbt.aspx

RESOURCES

- » Women in Military Service for America (WIMSA) Memorial
www.womensmemorial.org
- » Veterans History Project
www.loc.gov/vets
- » U.S. Army Women's Museum
www.awm.lee.army.mil
- » Alliance of National Defense
www.4militarywomen.org
- » National Association of Black Military Women
www.nabmw.com

- » U.S. Army Women's Foundation
www.awfdn.org
- » Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation
www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org
- » Women Marines Association
www.womenmarines.org
- » Women's Army Corps Veterans' Association
www.armywomen.org
- » Service Women's Action Network
www.servicewomen.org
- » OutServe-SLDN
www.sldn.org

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

MILITARY ONESOURCE

Military OneSource is a free service provided by the Department of Defense to service members and their families to help with a broad range of concerns including money management, spouse employment and education, parenting and childcare, relocation, deployment, reunion, and the particular concerns of families with special-needs members. The organization can also address more complex issues, like relationships, stress, and grief. Services are available 24 hours a day—by telephone with professionally trained consultants and online. Many Military OneSource staff members have military experience (veterans, spouses, Guardsmen, Reservists), and all receive ongoing training on military matters and military lifestyle. The program can be especially helpful to service members and their families who live at a distance from installations.

Military OneSource is provided by the Department of Defense at no cost to active duty, Guard and Reserve (regardless of activation status) and their families. It is a virtual extension of installation services. For more information, go to www.militaryonesource.com or call (800) 342-9647.

ARMY ONESOURCE

Army OneSource (AOS) is an Army program under the Family and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Command. While it is mainly an Army program, AOS supports military members and families of all branches, components, status, and locations throughout the world by connecting them with resources within their community. AOS strives to ensure military members and families not living in the immediate vicinity of an active duty installation still have adequate access to benefits and support they have earned. AOS consists of a workforce of Community Support Coordinators who proactively engage the community to develop these resources. To find the local Community Support Coordinators or to download a services locator application, go to www.myarmyonesource.com.



**REGISTER WITH CALVET TO RECEIVE VETERAN
BENEFIT INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO YOUR NEEDS!**

Coming in 2014, myCalVet will provide veterans and their families the opportunity to create a customized profile, targeting the benefits, resources, and services available in their community and throughout the State.

WWW.CALVET.CA.GOV



CHAPTER 8:

OTHER BENEFITS AND SERVICES



MILITARY RECORDS

Veterans or their next of kin who need assistance in obtaining service records, a DD 214, or replacement awards and medals must formally request them through the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). The NPRC is the records custodian for most discharged and retired members of all branches of service. The fastest way to obtain a copy is through their website, at www.archives.gov/veterans. Expect a two to three week wait to receive requested records.

Records can also be requested by mailing or faxing a Standard Form (SF) 180, Request Pertaining to Military Records to:

The National Personnel Records Center

1 Archives Drive
St. Louis, MO 63138
(314) 801-9195 (F)

The SF-180 is also available at CalVet District Offices (pg. 8) or at the local County Veterans Service Office (pg. 163). The form may also be obtained by fax from the NPRC by calling (301) 837-0990. Follow the directions given and request document number 2255.

Records requests must contain certain basic information, including:

- » The veteran's complete name used while in service;
- » Service number;
- » Social security number;
- » Branch of service;
- » Dates of service;
- » Date and place of birth (especially if the service number is not known).

If the veteran's records may have been involved in the 1973 fire, the following information must also be included:

- » Place of discharge;
- » Last unit of assignment;
- » Place of entry into the service, if known.

All requests must be signed and dated by the veteran or next-of-kin.

CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS

Regardless of military status, veterans who feel there is an error or injustice in their military personnel records can apply for a correction through their service's Board for the Correction of Military Records. These requests must be filed within three years of discovery of the error or injustice. This process may not be used to request an upgrade of a veteran's discharge; that is discussed in the following section.

Any person with military records, or his or her heirs or legal representative, may apply to the appropriate service's Board for the Correction of Military Records. The Army, Air Force, and Coast Guard have separate boards. The Navy operates the board for both Navy personnel and members of the United States Marine Corps.

Applying for a correction to military records is a simple process; however, it is highly recommend that the services of your County Veterans Service Office (CVSO) be used. Veterans who choose to do it for themselves must use DD Form 149, Application for Correction of Military Record, attach copies of statements or records that are relevant to the case, sign item 16, and mail the completed form to the appropriate address on the back side of the form.

The Board will correct the military records only if it can be proven that the veteran was the victim of error or injustice by providing evidence, such as signed statements from the veteran and other witnesses, or copies of records that support the case. The Board will not contact witnesses; but will review their signed statements if submitted with a veteran's request.

APPLYING FOR REVIEW OF DISCHARGE

Veterans must make their application for discharge upgrade within 15 years of discharge. If the veteran's discharge is older than 15 years, the veteran must apply for a change to military records using the process detailed in the previous section. The County Veterans Service Office is available to help veterans through this process; however, if veterans choose to do this themselves, they must use a DD Form 293, Application for the Review of Discharge or Dismissal from the Armed Forces of the United States. The DD Form 293 is available online or from most DoD installations.

Attach copies of statements or records that are relevant to the case, sign item 9 of the form, and mail the completed form to the appropriate address on the back side of the form. The Board will upgrade the discharge only if the veteran can prove that your discharge is inequitable or improper by providing evidence, such as signed statements from the veteran and other witnesses or copies of records that support the case. It is not enough to provide the names of witnesses. The Board will not contact witnesses to obtain statements. The veteran should contact witnesses to get their signed statements to submit with their request.

A veteran's personal statement is important. It should be written clearly and concisely in section 8 of DD Form 293. Carefully read the instructions on the back of the form concerning issues. Explain what happened and why it is improper or inequitable.

RE-ENTRY VETERANS BENEFITS

The VA's Healthcare for Re-Entry Veterans (HCRV) Program helps incarcerated veterans successfully transition to the area they will be living when released. A Re-Entry Specialist from HCRV goes to each correctional facility several times each year to meet with veterans six months before their release. With a little planning, many of the challenges commonly faced at release can be sorted out while veterans are still incarcerated.

The VA's Re-Entry Specialist helps with VA healthcare enrollment. If the veteran is already enrolled, the Re-Entry Specialist will ensure their paperwork is up to date. Following enrollment with the VA, the Re-Entry Specialist will meet individually with veterans who are within six months of their earliest possible release date.

Note: To resume their award for compensation or pension benefits on the date they are released from incarceration, the VA must receive notice of release within 1 year from the veteran's release date.

While incarcerated, CalVet recommends that veterans utilize the counselors and teachers trained to assist them in their preparation in the transition back into society. For more information, go to www.va.gov/homeless/reentry.asp, or contact:

VA Long Beach Healthcare System

Attn: Re-Entry Specialist
5901 E. 7th Street, Building 128 K131
Long Beach, CA 90822-5201
(562) 825-8000

VA Palo Alto Healthcare System

Attn: Re-Entry Specialist
795 Willow Road, Building 347 (180 D)
Menlo Park, CA 94025
(650) 493-5000

The compensation and pension benefits veterans receive from the VA change when they are incarcerated in a federal, state, or local penal institution. The amount the veteran will be paid depends on the type of benefit and reason for incarceration.

DISABILITY COMPENSATION PAY

Veterans receiving monthly disability compensation benefits will have their payment reduced beginning with the 61st day of imprisonment for a felony. For example, if the payment before going to prison was \$243 or more, the new payment amount will be \$123 (10% rate). Veterans receiving \$123 before they were imprisoned will only receive a payment of \$61.50 (1/2 of the 10% rate).

Note: Compensation payments will not be reduced for veterans who are released from incarceration, participated in a work release or half-way house program, paroled, and completed their sentence.

PENSION PAY

A veterans monthly pension benefits payments will be discontinued effective on the 61st day of imprisonment following conviction of a felony or misdemeanor.

VA MEDICAL CARE

Although incarcerated veterans do not forfeit their eligibility for medical care, current regulations restrict the VA from providing hospital and outpatient care to an incarcerated veteran who is an inmate in an institution of another government agency when that agency has a duty to give the care or services.

INCARCERATED VETERANS BENEFITS FOR DEPENDENTS

The VA can take all or part of the amount of compensation that a veteran does not receive and apportion it to their spouse, children, and dependent parents on the basis of individual need. Contact the nearest VA Regional Office (pg. 23) for details and provide the necessary income information to start the application process.

VOLUNTEER SERVICES

CALIFORNIA VOLUNTEERS

California Volunteers is the state office that manages programs and initiatives aimed at increasing the number of Californians engaged in volunteer service.

To learn more about volunteering in the State of California, go to www.californiavolunteers.org/index.php or call (888) 567-SERV (7378).

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VOLUNTARY SERVICE

VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) is committed to engaging American citizens in service and providing lasting benefits to the veterans and communities in which they live. To view volunteer projects in the area, volunteer, or donate, go to www.volunteer.va.gov/unitedweserve.asp.

The following volunteer opportunities are available at various VA facilities nationwide:

- » VA Homeless Veterans Program;
- » VA National Cemetery Administration;
- » VA Volunteer Transportation Network;
- » VA Welcome Home Celebrations.

For more information or to volunteer for one of the programs listed above, go to www.volunteer.va.gov or call (800) 827-1000.

STUDENT VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Student volunteers are an important part of the VA medical centers' treatment team. They act as community liaisons and provide a valuable element of caring for veterans in their area. Student volunteer opportunities may be available in the areas of audiology and speech pathology, outpatient and ambulatory care, physical therapy, medical administration, research, nursing, social work, and many others.

The VA Voluntary Service program offers students excellent opportunities to:

- » explore health care career options;
- » gain experience in a health care environment;
- » learn new skills;
- » make new friends;
- » qualify to be nominated for a James H. Parke Memorial college scholarship.

For a list of student volunteer opportunities, contact the local VA facility by calling (800) 827-1000 or go to the VA Volunteer Service site at www2.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isflash=1. To complete a volunteer application online, go to www.volunteer.va.gov/apps/volunteernow.

THE CALIFORNIA STATE MILITARY MUSEUM

The California State Military Museum is the official military museum and historical research center of the State of California under the California State Military Department. The museum is located at 1119 Second Street in the Old Sacramento State Historical Park, only a few minutes' walk from the State Capitol, The California State Railroad Museum, and several other fine museums, parks, and tourist attractions.

Today, the museum houses over 30,000 artifacts as well as a substantial library and archive. In addition to the main facility in Sacramento, the museum has five satellite museums at Camp Roberts in southern Monterey County, Camp San Luis Obispo, Fresno Air National Guard Base, the Los Alamitos Joint Forces Training Base in Orange County, and the National Guard Armory in San Diego. The museum also maintains relationships with the Aerospace Museum of California at the former McClellan AFB in North Highlands and the Sons of the Revolution in the State of California Library in Glendale.

To honor those Californians who have laid down their lives during the Global War on Terrorism, the California State Military Museum has built a “Global War on Terrorism Wall of Honor.” Constructed of black granite, this memorial is located at the entrance of the museum. The names of service members who died September 11, 2001, in the attack on the Pentagon, as well as those casualties of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan are listed chronologically. The memorial includes their rank, branch of service, and age.

For more information regarding museum hours of operation, go to www.militarymuseum.org or call (916) 442-2883.

CALIFORNIA VETERANS MEMORIAL REGISTRY

The California Veterans Memorial Registry (CVMR) is a permanent record to honor California veterans, past and present, who have served our nation since statehood was established in 1850. Whether a cook or fighter pilot, mechanic or chief of staff, this memorial honors our veterans. The CVMR forever immortalizes the contributions that California veterans have made to their nation.

In addition to being available on the CalVet website, www.calvet.ca.gov, the CVMR is installed in a video kiosk at the California Military Museum. Using a touch screen, users are able to access specific information about California veterans and the manner in which they served.



Each California veteran who received an honorable discharge is encouraged to register on the CVMR and is entitled to list name, rank, and branch of service. To create a truly living memorial, California veterans may expand on their basic information by making a donation to the enhanced registry.

The enhanced registry allows California veterans to include a photograph (preferably in military uniform) for a donation of \$35. A 100-word statement may be included for a donation of \$15. These fees are deposited into the California Veterans Memorial Registry Fund, which is provided for maintenance and data entry into the registry. Additional donations are accepted and encouraged.

The 100-word statement is a veteran's opportunity to describe their military experience, or that of a loved one. The written statement can include such information as medals awarded, duty stations, nicknames, anecdotes, hometown, or other relevant information. Visitors to the CVMR will be able to refer to this information forever and recall the military experience of a father or mother, grandfather or grandmother, sister or brother, cousin or friend.

A CVMR enrollment form can be downloaded at www.calvet.ca.gov (Veteran Services Program). The names of Californians who served in the military can be found by visiting the CVMR kiosk at the California Military Museum at 1119 2nd Street, Sacramento, CA or can be viewed the CVMR online at www.calvet.ca.gov (Veteran Services Program).

For more information, call (916) 653-2573. To submit an enrollment form, mail it to:

California Veterans Memorial Registry
1227 O Street, Room 101
Sacramento, CA 95814

CALIFORNIA NATIONAL GUARD

The Army National Guard is the oldest component of the U.S. Armed Forces and has participated in every U.S. conflict since it was organized by the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1636. The Army National Guard, the Air National Guard, and the California State Military Reserve are part of the California State Military Department.

Many men and women choose to join the National Guard after they are discharged from active duty service and do so for a variety of reasons. The Guard offers a series of benefits ranging from competitive pay and education assistance, to insurance and retirement benefits. A broad range of skills are learned through schools and job training, and leadership opportunities are numerous. Beyond these tangible benefits, most Guard members agree that the greatest benefit is the continued opportunity to serve one's country, state, and community. For more information, go to www.calguard.ca.gov.

FAMILY ASSISTANCE NETWORK

The California National Guard's Family Assistance Network (FAN) maintains a database of civilian, government, and military agencies that provide assistance to families struggling with issues related to active duty. For assistance locating a FAN specialist, Child & Youth specialist, Family Readiness Assistance, or an Airman & Family Readiness Program manager, call (800) 449-9662 for immediate assistance or go to www.calguard.ca.gov/readyfamilies.

WE CARE MEETINGS

FAN also hosts monthly "We Care" meetings open to all branches of the service. These meetings give service members and their families, friends, and employers the opportunity to establish a local social support group, receive advice and support from people who understand what they are going through, and keep current on military news and benefits. To find a We Care meeting nearby, go to www.calguard.ca.gov/readyfamilies.

NATIONAL GUARD FAMILY PROGRAM

The Joint Services Support Family Program (JSSFP), headquartered in Massachusetts, provides extensive nationwide support to service members and their families to help them deal with the stresses of deployment, mobilization, and reintegration. For more information on the services that JSSFP can provide, go to www.jointservicesupport.org/FP/Family.aspx.

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE ADVISOR (TAA)

The Transition Assistance Advisor serves as a statewide point of contact and coordinator providing technical support to managers, supervisors, Guard members and their family members regarding the benefits and entitlements available through the VA. Transition Assistance Advisors also provide technical assistance in resolving entitlements to TRICARE.

CALIFORNIA TRANSITION ASSISTANCE ADVISORS

» **Nicole Townsend**

(916) 826-6549

(559) 255-5796 (F)

nicole.townsend1@us.army.mil

» **Horst Laube**

(916) 854-3315

(916) 854-3439 (F)

YELLOW RIBBON REINTEGRATION PROGRAM

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) is a Department of Defense (DoD)-wide effort to help National Guard and Reserve service members and their families connect with local resources before, during, and after deployments. Not to be confused with the education benefit, the YRRP events bring together service providers that can assist veterans and their families in accessing information on veterans benefits, healthcare, education/training opportunities, financial, and legal benefits. DOD works in conjunction with federal partners, including the Small Business Administration and Departments of Labor and Veterans Affairs, to provide up-to-date and relevant information to the members of the all-volunteer force and their families. In addition, CalVet gives comprehensive benefits presentations at most Yellow Ribbon events occurring within the state.

TRICARE

TRICARE Reserve Select is a premium-based health plan available worldwide to Selected Reserve members of the Ready Reserve (and their families) who are not eligible for or enrolled in the Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) program (as defined in Chapter 89 of Title 5 USC) or currently covered under FEHB, either under their own eligibility or through a family member.

For information about enrollment, eligibility, benefits, authorizations, and claims, call (877) TRICARE (874-2273), or go to www.tricare.mil/ContactUs/CallUs.aspx.

ESGR

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) is a DoD agency that seeks to develop and promote a culture in which all American employers support and value the military service of their employees. It does so by recognizing outstanding support, increasing awareness of the law, and resolving conflicts through mediation.

Why is employer support important? Almost half of our military force resides in the Reserve Component which is comprised of the National Guard and Reserve. The men and women who serve in the Reserve Component are unique in that they also have civilian employers. Support of America's employers and the employees they share with the nation ensures the viability of the all-volunteer force, and strengthens our national security.

To reach the local ESGR Committee for information or assistance, go to www.esgr.org, call (800) 336-4590, call the local National Guard or Reserve unit, or go to www.calguard.ca.gov/J1/Pages/ESGR.aspx.

CALIFORNIA STATE MILITARY RESERVE

The California State Military Reserve (CSMR) is an all-volunteer state defense force authorized by law under the California Military and Veterans Code as sworn members of the California Military Department. The CSMR's primary mission is to support the Soldiers and Airmen of the California National Guard in its homeland defense and homeland security missions, and in its service to California during times of state emergencies.

The CSMR offers men and women who have left military service the opportunity to continue to serve their state and their communities.

To learn more about the CSMR, including eligibility requirements and application procedures, go to www.calguard.ca.gov/CSMR.

UNIFORMS FOR RETIRED AND SEPARATED PERSONNEL

Retired or separated officers and enlisted personnel, who are not on active duty, may wear the uniform, insignia, and qualifications corresponding to the rank or rating at time of separation. The wear and appearance of the uniform will conform to the standards of the specific branch of service that the uniform represents.

Wearing a uniform is appropriate at ceremonies or official functions when the dignity of the occasion and good taste dictate such as: memorial services, weddings, funerals, balls, patriotic or military parades, ceremonies in which any active or reserve military unit is participating, and meetings or functions of military associations.

Retired or separated personnel are prohibited from wearing the uniform in connection with personal enterprises, business activities, or while attending or participating in any demonstration, assembly or activity for the purpose of furthering personal or partisan views on political, social, economic, or religious issues.

Note: This is standard throughout the Army, Marines, Navy, and Coast Guard. The Air Force further allows wear of the uniform for social gatherings of a military nature.

CALIFORNIA STATE MILITARY RESERVE (CSMR) COMPONENT

The uniform for the CSMR will follow the above guidelines; however, the appearance of the uniform will adhere to the following changes:

1. Army Utility Uniforms

The "U.S. ARMY" nametape over the left breast pocket will be replaced with a nametape which will read "CALIFORNIA".

2. Army Service Uniform

- » The "U.S." insignia will be replaced with a "CA" insignia.
- » All authorized "U.S. Army buttons" will be replaced with California State "Eureka" buttons.
- » The black nameplate will be replaced with a red nameplate.

3. The "U.S. Army" headgear insignia will be replaced with the CSMR headgear insignia on the service cap.

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HOUSING EMPLOYMENT

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